

# Witness of Suffering

Reliving the final days of Saint John Paul II

Philip F. Lawler, Editor



A Catholic Culture publication.

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Reliving the final days of Saint John Paul II

by Philip F. Lawler, ed.

The unforgettable final days in the life of Saint John Paul II, recaptured in the Catholic World News headline coverage of his final struggle, illness, and death.

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# Introduction

by Phil Lawler

Who could forget those early days of April 2005, when the attention of the entire world was focused on St. Peter's Square?

No other man in history had been so highly visible for so many years. We felt that we knew him well; hundreds of millions of us loved and revered him. As the years passed we watched him grow old. We saw his health deteriorate, and by early in 2005 we knew that the end was near.

During those unforgettable last days of the beloved Pontiff's life, the attention of the whole world was riveted on St. Peter's Square. This too was unprecedented: to have an international audience of countless millions watching, waiting, praying, as one man's life ebbed away.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the longtime spokesman for the Polish Pontiff, remarked that John Paul II made a deliberate decision in his final years to suffer through his last illness in full public view. He did not disguise his infirmity; he allowed the whole world to watch him struggle as his strength failed. The Pontiff who had written the encyclical *Salvific Doloris*, On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, now delivered the same message even more eloquently by his personal example.

So in the final days of his historic pontificate, the world was captivated—as the world had been captivated so many times during the years, by his charismatic personality and his powerful teaching. This was the final chapter in a fascinating story. There had never before been such a very public death. But then there had probably never before been such a very public life.

In this book, we seek to capture the emotion of those final days, by reproducing the headline stories posted by Catholic World News during the last several weeks of the Pope's life. To preserve the immediacy of the story, we have left those reports unchanged, providing only the information that we had when they were originally posted. During those early weeks of 2005 our information was nearly always incomplete and sometimes downright misleading. Still, the story moves steadily toward the climax.

Reading these news stories today, I think, allows us to relive those moments, and to learn anew the final lessons that Saint John Paul II taught us in his suffering and death.

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# The First Crisis: January 31- February 7

# Ailing Pope suspends audiences

## January 31, 2005

Pope John Paul II suspended all audiences on January 31 because of what the Vatican described as “flu-like symptoms.” At his regular Sunday audience on January 30 the Holy Father appeared unusually weak, and spoke with some difficulty. Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the spokesman for the Vatican, said that the Pope was already suffering from the flu on Sunday.

For the moment, no changes have been made in the Pope’s schedule for later in the week. He is still expected to meet with the Swiss bishops who are making their ad limina visits this week, and to appear on Wednesday for his usual weekly public audience.

The Vatican has given no reason to believe that the Pope’s illness is particularly serious, although his health is always a cause for some concern. John Paul II has suspended his appearances on several previous occasions because of minor illnesses—most recently in September 23, during a bout with what Navarro-Valls characterized as an “intestinal indisposition.”

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# Pope's illness forces more cancellations

## February 01, 2005

Pope John Paul II has cancelled his scheduled activities, including his public audience for Wednesday, February 2, because of a continued bout with what the Vatican describes as “flu-like symptoms.”

An epidemic of flu is sweeping Italy, and Vatican officials have indicated that the Holy Father's condition is nothing more serious. However, in light of the Pope's frail health, any disease is cause for concern.

The Pope's schedule has now been cleared for February 1 and 2 as well. Officials are waiting to see whether the Pope will recover sufficiently to resume normal activities later in the week.

John Paul II first showed signs of sickness on Sunday, January 30, when he had obvious difficulty reading the prepared text of his remarks at his Angelus audience. On Monday, all of his audiences were suspended, although the Vatican announcement indicated that he had received the new copy of the Vatican yearbook, the *Annuario Pontificio*—an indication that his illness was not severe.

“The Pope is in bed,” said Father Leonardo Sapienza, an official of the pontifical household. Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, said that the Holy Father's symptoms were typical for a flu victim. Pope John Paul had been scheduled to preside at ceremonies for the Day for Consecrated Life on February 2, including a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica. In his absence, Archbishop Franc Rode, the prefect of the Congregation for Consecrated Life, will preside.

Because many pilgrims had already sought admission to the scheduled papal audience on that same day, Cardinal Angelo Sodano will replace the Pope, reading the text that John Paul had prepared for that occasion.

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# Pope rushed to hospital

## February 01, 2005

Pope John Paul II has been hospitalized because of respiratory problems brought on by the flu.

The Holy Father was taken by ambulance to the Gemelli Hospital in Rome in the evening of February 1. Vatican officials say that he was suffering from serious breathing difficulty, apparently because of an infection in his respiratory system.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, said that the Pope's hospitalization was precautionary. At this point his condition is not regarded as an emergency, he said.

Pope John Paul has been suffering from flu symptoms since Sunday, January 30. All of his scheduled public appearances for this week have been suspended.

Although Vatican officials were careful to avoid spreading alarm, the Holy Father's medical condition is serious. Pope John Paul suffers from Parkinson's disease, which impairs his ability to breathe freely; any problem with his respiratory system can be dangerous.

Doctors have already set up sophisticated medical facilities in the papal apartments, so that they are prepared to cope with the predictable symptoms of the Pope's illness. The doctors' decision to hospitalize the Pontiff indicates that his condition is very serious.

Pope John Paul is 84 years old, and has undergone surgery 9 times for a variety of complaints including broken bones, gunshot wounds, and cancer.

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# Pope's condition stabilized; will remain in hospital

## February 02, 2005

The medical condition of Pope John Paul II has stabilized after a night in Gemelli Hospital, where he was treated for respiratory problems, the Vatican press office has disclosed.

Papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters that the Holy Father received “respiratory assistance therapy” after being hospitalized in the evening on February 1. After treatment the Pope was able to sleep, and by the morning of February 2 his condition was improved and he was able to concelebrate Mass from his hospital bed.

Navarro-Valls heatedly denied reports that the Pope had undergone a tracheotomy, or that he had lost consciousness. The director of the Vatican press office—who is a trained physician himself—said that tests performed on the Pontiff show that “cardio-respiratory and metabolic parameters are currently within normal range.” The Pope is running a slight fever, he reported—as expected, since he is suffering from the flu.

Pope John Paul was rushed to the hospital because of “laryngeal tracheitis,” Navarro-Valls said. After a few days with “flu-like symptoms,” he had developed a severe difficulty in breathing. Shortly before 11 o’clock, an ambulance was called to transfer the Pope to the hospital “as a precaution.”

After briefing reporters on Wednesday morning, Navarro-Valls said, “I am going home; the situation is calm. There is no reason for alarm.” He indicated that the Vatican does not expect to release any more medical bulletins during the day.

The Pope will stay in the hospital for “a few days,” the Vatican announced. No announcements have been made about when he might return to the Vatican, or resume normal activities.

Navarro-Valls noted that John Paul II had not been admitted to the hospital’s emergency room or intensive-care unit. He is staying in a 10th-floor room that has been reserved for his use. During the night his condition was monitored by Dr. Rodolfo Proietti of the Gemelli emergency staff. The Pope’s personal physician, Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, consulted with hospital personnel but did not stay at the Gemelli; he visited the Pope on Wednesday morning.

When he was taken to the hospital, the Pope was accompanied by two Polish secretaries: Archbishop Stanislas Dziwisz and Msgr. Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki. Dr. Buzzonetti accompanied the Pontiff to the hospital, but left soon after John Paul was settled in his room. On Wednesday morning, Archbishop Dziwisz celebrated Mass in the Pope's hospital room. Navarro-Valls reported that the Pope concelebrated from his bed.

Security has been tightened at the Gemelli Hospital since the Pope's arrival—not only to protect him but also to secure his privacy and ensure that his rest is not interrupted. Within an hour after the Pope's arrival, scores of journalists had gathered around the front door of the hospital.

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# Vatican attempts business as usual despite Pope's illness

## February 02, 2005

Vatican officials did their best to carry out a normal work day on Wednesday, February 2, after Pope John Paul was hospitalized with breathing difficulties.

Television crews were camped around the Gemelli Hospital, where the Pope is staying, but after assuring reporters that the Pontiff's condition was stable, officials there offered no further medical bulletins. Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls reported that the Pope's fever had eased, and "there is no reason for particular alarm."

The Pope's regular weekly public audience, which had been scheduled for midday, had already been cancelled earlier in the week. But many visitors were in St. Peter's Square, gazing at the windows of the Pope's apartment in the apostolic palace. There was also heavy traffic in and out of St. Peter's Basilica, with hundreds of people evidently visiting to say a prayer for the Pontiff.

Among the officials of the Roman Curia, the subject of the Pope's health dominated discussions. And the Vatican press office was unusually busy, with editors around the world looking for any available updates—and finding very little new information.

Meanwhile the regular business of the Holy See continued. The Vatican announced the appointments of three new bishops, as well as new members of the Congregation for Divine Worship—appointments the Pope had made prior to his hospitalization.

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# Pope thanks faithful for their prayers

## February 02, 2005

Pope John Paul II has issued a message thanking the faithful for the prayers that were poured out on his behalf when he was hospitalized on February 1.

Archbishop Franc Rode, the prefect of the Congregation for Consecrated Life, relayed the Pope's message during his homily as he celebrated Mass in the Vatican basilica for the annual Day for Consecrated Life. Archbishop Rode presided at that Mass in place of the Holy Father, whose public appearances were suspended earlier this week because of his illness. "I bring you the greetings of the Pope, who thanks you for your affection and your fervent prayer," Archbishop Rode said. He added that the Pontiff "is with us in prayer, and sends his blessing" to the religious assembled in St. Peter's for the ceremony.

The Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated on the feast of the Presentation, February 2—also known as the festival of light, or Candlemas. Pope John Paul had originally planned to preside at the ceremony, in one of his few public liturgical ceremonies of 2005.

The Pope's expression of thanks was directed not only at those attending the Vatican ceremony, but also the many people who had sent messages and promised prayers upon hearing of his hospitalization.

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# Pope's condition improving

## February 03, 2005

Pope John Paul II rested comfortably during his second night in Gemelli Hospital, and the Holy Father's respiratory problems have eased considerably, the Vatican has announced.

In statements to the press on February 3, Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the Pope showed "positive developments," with no further episodes of the breathing spasms that caused his hospitalization earlier this week.

The director of the Vatican press office said that doctors would determine when they think it is prudent for the Pope to return to the Vatican. But Navarro-Valls—who is trained as a physician himself—estimated that the Pontiff's hospital stay would be "about a week."

Pope John Paul met with several visitors in his hospital room on Thursday. He is meeting regularly with his closest aides, notably his personal secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz.

The Vatican press office announced that a new bulletin on the Pope's condition would be made available on Friday. The press office—along with Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Secretary of State—is making all announcements about the Pope's medical conditions. Doctors at Gemelli Hospital have declined to make any public comments.

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# Swiss prelate lauds Pope's courage

February 03, 2005

The president of the Swiss bishops' conference believes that the courage and faith of Pope John Paul II are an encouragement to sick and aged people everywhere.

Bishop Amadee Grab of the Chur diocese, who is in Rome along with the other Swiss bishops for his *ad limina* visit, said that Pope John Paul should "certainly not" resign the pontificate. The Holy Father's example is a testimony to the power of faith and fortitude, he said.

The Pope's hospitalization came as a shock to the visiting Swiss prelates, Bishop Grab said, because a personal chat with the Pontiff is the highlight of every bishop's *ad limina* visit. "This time we have been deprived, but we are united with the entire Catholic world in praying for the Pope's health," he said. Bishop Grab said that he was reconciled to the fact that he and the other Swiss bishops would not meet with the Pope personally, since they had been informed that the Pontiff's hospital stay was likely to be about a week—continuing until after the Swiss prelates return home. The bishops are proceeding with the other scheduled events of their visit, including conversations with chiefs of the Roman Curia.

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# Background: the Pope's previous hospital trips

## February 04, 2005

Since his election to the pontificate in October 1978, Pope John Paul II has been hospitalized on 9 separate occasions, for a combined stay of 136 days in the hospital prior to this week's visit.

The Gemelli Hospital, located in the hills of Rome, has been nicknamed "Vatican III" because of the Pope's several stays there. The hospital keeps a specialized unit available for the Pontiff on its 10th floor. The unit can readily be isolated from the remainder of the hospital, giving the Pope privacy and security and allowing him to conduct some Church business from his quarters.

The Holy Father's most recent previous stay at the Gemelli Hospital was in October 1996, when he had underwent an appendectomy. The surgery lasted less than an hour, and John Paul II was hospitalized for 10 days. Two of the Pope's hospital stays—in July 1993 and August 1996—were for periods of only a few hours, while he was given CAT scans, as follow-up procedures after earlier surgeries.

The other times when he was hospitalized were:

- May 13, 1981, after he was shot in St. Peter's Square; a complex 6-hour operation was required to save his life.
- June 20, 1981, for follow-up treatment to correct complications from the gunshot wounds; a second surgery was performed in August.
- July 15, 1992, for surgery to remove a benign tumor from his colon.
- November 13, 1993, for treatment of a fractured shoulder suffered in a fall.
- April 29, 1994, for treatment of a broken leg, also suffered in a fall.
- October 8, 1996, for the appendectomy.

Because the Pope requires continuing treatment for the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, doctors have installed medical equipment in the papal apartments. Thus for the

past few years the Pontiff has been able to receive medical treatment at home rather than requiring a visit to the hospital.

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# Pope improving, hopes to make Sunday audience

## February 04, 2005

With his medical condition steadily improving, Pope John Paul II is hoping to hold his regular Sunday public audience on February 6—although special arrangements may be necessary to allow the Pope to speak from his hospital room.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, announced on February 4 that “the Holy Father’s health has improved.” Although he did not fix a date when the Pope might be discharged from Gemelli Hospital, he said that John Paul II is eating regularly, and all tests “confirm the stabilizing of the clinical picture” after a bout with respiratory problems earlier in the week.

Navarro-Valls said that the Angelus audience on Sunday is “very dear to the Holy Father and one which he does not want to miss.” He said that on Saturday he would be “more precise regarding the manner” in which the audience could take place. Twice in the past—in May 1981 and October 1996—Pope John Paul has addressed Sunday audiences by a radio broadcast from his hospital room.

Navarro-Valls said that a new bulletin on the Pope’s medical condition would be released on Monday, February 7—implying that journalists should not expect further information until that time. All communication about the Pope’s health are being handled by the Vatican, with officials at the Gemelli Hospital making no comments to the press.

On Saturday, February 5, the Holy Father had been scheduled to meet in a private audience with the students at Rome’s major seminary. In his place, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, the deputy Secretary of State, will read the Pope’s prepared text. Navarro-Valls said that the Pontiff would follow the ceremony, which will take place in the Paul VI auditorium, by television.

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# Media furor eases as Pope's condition improves

## February 04, 2005

With Pope John Paul in Gemelli Hospital for a third day, and his condition evidently stable, the furor of media attention that struck the Vatican earlier this week has subsided.

Reporters in Rome are still eagerly awaiting the next public appearance by the Holy Father. Vatican officials now suggest that he will remain in the hospital at least through Monday, February 7. But he may address pilgrims in St. Peter's Square, by means of a radio connection from his hospital room, on Sunday.

Television crews are still keeping a vigil at the Gemelli Hospital, with their cameras pointing at the windows of the 10th floor, where the Pope is staying in a room that has been reserved especially for his use since 1981. Although hospital personnel are making no public comments—leaving all communication about the Pope's condition to the Vatican press office—reporters are still watching the hospital doors, taking note of the people who may be going to visit the Holy Father.

At the Vatican press office, the press is searching for any new clue about the Pope's condition. But on Friday, after his daily visit to the Pontiff in the morning, spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls had no immediate comment. He released a terse statement at noon, and answered a few follow-up questions from the press, without providing any dramatic announcements. Navarro-Valls said that in the absence of unexpected developments, there would be no more medical bulletins until Monday.

The possibility that the Pope might address his usual Sunday audience has provided one topic for speculation. Twice in the past, the Holy Father spoke to the public from his hospital room: on May 17, 1981, shortly after he was shot in an assassination attempt; and on October 13, 1996, after his appendectomy. In the latter case, he also came to the window of his hospital room to wave down at the crowd below.

The offices of the Roman Curia are functioning on schedule. "We activity is completely normal," said one member of a Vatican congregation. He added: "This is not the first time the Pope has been sick."

Other curial officials, taking a more sympathetic approach, have indicated that they are deeply concerned about the Pope's condition, but believe their duty is to continue

working on a regular schedule. So Vatican offices are holding the meetings that have already been planned, with several press conferences still on the schedule for next week—including one at which a new document on the work of marriage tribunals will be released.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, has taken the Pope's place in meetings with visiting dignitaries from abroad. Cardinal Sodano met on February 4 with Josep Borell Fontelles, the president of the European parliament; he will meet on February 8 with US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice. Such meetings are not unusual for the cardinal; he regularly speaks with foreign officials after their formal sessions with the Pontiff.

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# Pope will not address Sunday audience

## February 05, 2005

Pope John Paul II will not speak at his regular Sunday public audience on February 6, but he will give his blessing, from his hospital room, to the pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The Vatican has also announced that the Pope will not preside, as planned, at Ash Wednesday services in St. Peter's Basilica to open the season of Lent on February 9.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls announced on February 5 that the Holy Father did not want to miss the Sunday audience. But in light of his weakened physical condition, the Pope will not lead the recitation of the Angelus, the director of the Vatican press office reported. Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, the deputy Secretary of State, will lead the prayer. The archbishop will also read a discourse that the Pope had already prepared, Navarro-Valls said.

On Friday, the Vatican spokesman had indicated that the Pope was hoping to take part in the Sunday audience—an event that he regards as a high priority. He has addressed the Angelus audience from a hospital room twice in the past: in May 1981 and in October 1996.

The Ash Wednesday service, which is scheduled for midday on February 9, ordinarily replaces the Pope's weekly public audience. With John Paul II still unable to preside, his place will be taken by Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

Pope John Paul was hospitalized in the evening of February 1 with severe breathing difficulties. After emergency therapy his condition stabilized, and Navarro-Valls has said that there is now "no reason for alarm" about his immediate condition. The Vatican spokesman said that the Pontiff would probably be hospitalized for "about a week." He has indicated that the next bulletin about the Pope's medical condition will be issued on Monday.

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# Ecumenical prayer vigil for Pope's health

## February 07, 2005

Dozens of Christian leaders, representing a variety of denominations, gathered at the Gemelli Hospital in a prayer vigil for the recovery of Pope John Paul II on Saturday, February 5.

Brought together in Rome for the 37th anniversary of the St. Egidio community, the Christian leaders—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—traveled to the hospital on the 5th day of the Pope's stay there after a bout with breathing difficulties brought on by the flu.

Bishop Vincenzo Paglia of Terni, Italy, was invited to visit with the Pope in his hospital room, as a representative of the ecumenical delegation. He brought the Pontiff a letter signed by 82 bishops of different faiths, from Europe, Africa, and Asia, promising their continued prayers for his recovery. "He was very happy" with the gesture, Bishop Paglia reported.

"The Pope was speaking, he was making himself understood well, and his voice is improving," the Italian bishop said after his visit.

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# Brief papal appearance Sunday

## February 07, 2005

Pope John Paul II appeared at the window of his hospital room to give his blessing to the faithful on Sunday, February 6—thus putting to rest some of the most disquieting rumors about his medical condition.

Although he did not address the crowd at his regular Angelus audience, the Pope did send a clear message that he plans to continue serving the Church for as long as he lives—thus also discouraging speculation that he might resign.

The Holy Father—who had not been seen in public since his emergency hospitalization on February 1—came to the window of his room on the 10th floor of the Gemelli Hospital, and gave his blessing to the crowd on the street below. His appearance brought a cheer to the thousands of people who had gathered in St. Peter’s Square, the usual site of the Sunday papal audience, to watch on giant video screens.

The Pope clearly made the Sign of the Cross as he gave his blessing. But his words were badly slurred, his voice raspy, and his breathing labored as he spoke. Later, some Italian reporters suggested that Vatican officials had hurriedly dubbed an old recording of the Pope’s voice into a broadcast of the event, to draw attention away from his current difficulties. [See today’s *Forum* story.]

Apart from giving his blessing, Pope John Paul did not address the audience. As the Vatican had indicated in advance, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, the deputy Secretary of State, led the Angelus and read a prepared message for the Pope.

In that message, John Paul II said: “Even here in the hospital, in the midst of other sick people to whom I send my affection, I continue to serve the Church and all of mankind.” He thanked the medical personnel who have been caring for him, and the countless people around the world who have prayed for his recovery.

The Pope’s prepared message also took note that Italy was marking the annual Day for Life. He urged “all people of good will to defend the basic right to life.”

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# Let the Pope decide about retirement, cardinal says

## February 07, 2005

The question of the Pope's possible retirement should be left solely to the Pontiff himself, according to the Vatican Secretary of State.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, speaking at the opening of the John Paul II International Library in Rome on February 7, said that the Pope is still clearly capable of guiding the Church. Although his physical health curtails his activities, the Pontiff can "govern the life of the Church in different ways," he said.

When pressed by reporters to comment on the increasing difficulty that the Holy Father encounters in trying to speak, Cardinal Sodano replied: "Certainly the Pope can express himself without speaking."

The possibility of retirement should be left "to the conscience of the Pope, guided by the Holy Spirit," the cardinal said. "We should have enormous confidence in him, that he knows what to do," he added.

During his formal address at the library opening, the Vatican's second-ranking official said that John Paul II has produced a "luminous" body of teaching for the Church, and Catholics will continue to draw on that teaching for years to come. He expressed his own hope that the Pope will enjoy a long and peaceful life.

As for the Pontiff's latest illness, the Italian cardinal said that "the affection of his children throughout the worldwide Church will be the best cure."

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35113>

# Pope voice dubbed to conceal speaking difficulty?

February 07, 2005

The director of the Vatican press office has flatly denied Italian media reports that officials there dubbed an old recording of the Pope's voice onto a broadcast of his Angelus audience on February 6, to cover up the Pontiff's badly slurred voice.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the Italian media reports "make no sense." Earlier on Monday, Father Federico Lombardi, the director of Vatican Radio programming, had been more cautious in responding to the reports. "I do not deny anything; I do not confirm anything," he had said when questioned about the charges.

During his first public appearance since his hospitalization, on Sunday, February 6, Pope John Paul II gave his blessing from the window of his room at the Gemelli Hospital. Some reporters noticed that the voice heard in the Vatican broadcast of the event seemed to change during the course of that blessing.

Because of his weakness, and especially his difficulty in breathing and speaking, Pope John Paul had not delivered his usual discourse to the Sunday audience. Instead his message was read by Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, who also led the praying of the Angelus. The Pope only spoke to give his blessing.

The Pope began, in Latin, with the usual formula: "*Sit nomen Domini benedictum.*" (His aides in the hospital room responded, "*Ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.*") The Pope continued—in a voice that was breathless and raspy, his words severely slurred: "*Adiutorium nostrum...*" At that point the broadcast was interrupted.

When the audio broadcast was restored, listeners heard what seemed to be the Pope's voice, speaking much more clearly: "... *nel nome del Padre, del Figlio, e dello Spirito Santo.*" The blessing, which had begun in Latin, was concluded in Italian.

(At the time, the Pope's lips were not visible; from the camera angle below the 10th-floor hospital room, the lower portion of the Pope's face was obscured by a paper that an aide was holding up in front of him. So it was not possible to determine whether the words of the broadcast were in sync with the Pope's speech.)

Alert Roman reporters concluded that Vatican officials had substituted an old tape of the Pope's voice for the faltering live version. When questioned about that possibility,

the Vatican Radio director was evasive. “You saw the images of the Pope,” said Father Lombardi. “That’s what the world was waiting for.”

However, Joaquin Navarro-Valls insisted that the reporters’ suspicions were baseless. “Naturally,” he said, “the words of the Holy Father during the blessing this morning were pronounced at the same time when we heard them on the direct broadcast.”

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35105>

# Recovering Pope to remain hospitalized

## February 07, 2005

Pope John Paul II no longer has a fever, and a Vatican bulletin on February 7 indicated that his recovery was continuing without incident, but he will remain in the Gemelli Hospital for several more days “for obvious precautionary reasons.”

In his Monday statement on the Pope’s condition, Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the Holy Father is “eating regularly and sat in an armchair for a few hours.” He added that the Pontiff is concelebrating Mass—presumably from his bed—each day.

Despite his illness, John Paul II has evidently retained his self-deprecating sense of humor. Navarro-Valls told reporters that the Pope is reading the newspapers regularly; he said that the Pontiff wanted to see “how my illness is going.”

The Pope is receiving hundreds of messages of support and sympathy, Navarro-Valls said. “Many people are confiding their suffering to the Pope, who keeps the whole world in his prayer,” he added. The Vatican spokesman reported that some of the most moving messages have come from the Pope’s fellow patients at the Gemelli Hospital.

The director of the Vatican press office said that the next regular bulletin on the Pope’s condition would not be released until Thursday, February 10. Reporters quickly inferred that John Paul II would remain hospitalized at least until that day.

However, Navarro-Valls said that it was still possible—“neither ruled out nor confirmed”—that the Pope might be in St. Peter’s Basilica, as scheduled, on February 11 for a Mass on the World Day for the Sick. The Pope’s doctors will make the decision, he said.

The Vatican has already announced that John Paul II will not preside at Ash Wednesday services on February 10. Those services—which would have replaced his normal weekly public audience at noon on Wednesday—will be led by Cardinal J. Francis Stafford.

The Pope’s next scheduled public appearance—barring a change—will be his noonday audience on next Sunday, February 13.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35103>

Lent: February 8-22



# Pope concelebrates Ash Wednesday Mass in hospital room

February 09, 2005

Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass in his room at the Gemelli Hospital on Ash Wednesday, inviting the doctors who have cared for him to attend the liturgical ceremony.

The Holy Father—who was unable to preside at Ash Wednesday services in St. Peter’s Basilica for the first time in his pontificate—concelebrated the Mass, and blessed the ashes that were imposed on those in attendance, the Vatican press office disclosed.

Pope John Paul has been concelebrating Mass regularly since he was hospitalized on February 1, the Vatican has reported. On at least one occasion his secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, was the main celebrant, with the Pontiff concelebrating from his bed. Officials have not indicated whether the Pope has been able to act as principal celebrant. The next medical bulletin about the Pontiff’s condition is expected on Thursday, February 10.

The Vatican statement did not disclose the names of the concelebrants. Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, the Pope’s personal physician, was the only member of the congregation named in the press release.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35160>

# Papal resignation: a complex canonical issue

February 09, 2005

The latest medical crisis of Pope John Paul II, who has now been hospitalized for a week, has reignited media speculation about the possibility that the Pope might resign. Although that possibility always been dismissed by Vatican officials, the speculation in Rome persists.

In a February 7 session with reporters, Cardinal Angelo Sodano suggested that the question of resignation should be left “up to the conscience of the Pope, who is guided by the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Father himself has given every indication that he plans to continue serving as Roman Pontiff until his death.

The current wave of speculation about papal retirement is the most serious since 2002, when the issue was thoroughly discussed in the Roman press. But each time John Paul II shows signs of illness, the subject is revived.

In the spring of 2002, during the weeks after his annual Lenten retreat, Pope John Paul appeared severely exhausted, and German newspapers advanced the theory that he might announce his resignation during a pastoral visit to Poland later that year. The theory went so far as to suggest that the Pontiff would retire to a monastery in Poland, to live quietly for his remaining days. The Holy Father set that rumor to rest when, during a visit to a Marian shrine in Poland, he prayed for “the strength of body and spirit so that I will be able to carry out, to the very end, the mission that has been entrusted to me.”

Observers saw that prayer as a clear personal statement that the Pope has no intention of resigning. And the Pope reinforced that impression when he told a colleague that he would not consider resignation “because Jesus did not come down from the Cross.”

In 2002, with the Pope’s health clearly in decline, the question of resignation was raised once again. Prior to the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of his election to the papacy, several cardinals expressed their own views on the subject—in most cases, saying that the Pope should make his own decision, but with a few prelates gently hinting that resignation might be wise. But once again the Pontiff quelled the speculation with an announcement that he planned to carry on.

John Paul II himself raised the question of a papal resignation in his apostolic constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis*, published in February 1996, which sets out the rules for a new papal election. In that document the Pope alluded to the *Code of Canon Law*, article 332, which stipulates that the resignation of a Pope is valid as long as it is made freely and properly witnessed.

There is also a precedent for a papal resignation. In 1294, Pope Celestine V was elected under strained political circumstances. An elderly hermit who was chosen because of his reputation for holiness, Celestine abdicated the papacy after five months, explaining that he was too old, ill, and unskilled to carry out his duties of the Pontiff. (Pope Celestine announced his resignation before the College of Cardinals. But the current *Code of Canon Law* specifies that a papal resignation is valid immediately; it does not require acceptance by the cardinals.) He then retired to his hermitage.

The validity of that resignation was questioned by some of the cardinals who met to elect Celestine's successor, Boniface VIII. Some prelates questioned whether Celestine had been pressured to resign; others suggested that the bond between the Pope and the Church is like a marital union, which cannot be dissolved except by death. The case of Celestine V remains a central precedent in any discussion of papal resignation, and in 1966, when Pope Paul VI visited Celestine's grave, there was a spate of speculation that the Pope was planning his own resignation.

Prior to Celestine V, several other Roman Pontiffs had stepped down, under circumstances that are now shrouded by historical uncertainties. Pope Martin I, who was arrested and then exiled in 653 by the Byzantine emperor, may have approved the election of his successor, Pope Eugene I. Three hundred years later, in 964, Pope Benedict V, often considered an anti-pope, was deposed by Emperor Otto I, and accepted the emperor's verdict that he had no proper claim on the papacy.

There are other examples. Pope John XVIII died in 1009 as a simple monk at the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome; Sylvester III, who was expelled by his rival Benedict IX in 1045, retired to his own diocese; and Benedict IX himself abdicated a few months later in favor of Gregory VI. Finally Gregory XII renounced his claim to the papacy at the Council of Constance in 1415, and resumed his role as a cardinal. This was during the time of the great Western Schism, when the Church found three different men claiming the papacy. Professor Giuseppe Dalla Torre, rector of the LUMSA Catholic university in Rome and president of the tribunal for the Vatican city-state, points out that the *Code of Canon Law* provides very little guidance about papal retirement. Canon 332 provides that a resignation must be freely given, and Canon 335 allows for the possibility that the papacy may be "vacant, or completely impeded." But

the *Code* does not address the question of what would happen if a Pope became incapacitated—unable either to govern or to resign freely.

This could create “a delicate situation,” Dalla Torre acknowledges, pointing out that canon-law experts have discussed the possibility only in theoretical terms. He explains that the College of Cardinals is not authorized to judge the capacity or incapacity of the Pope. Doctors might attest to the physical condition of the Pontiff, but if they determine that he is fully incapacitated, it is not clear what steps could be taken next.

Questioned whether Pope John Paul could continue in office if he lost his ability to speak, Dalla Torre replies: “From the juridical perspective, that is not a problem.” He explains that the Pontiff might communicate in writing, or by gestures. “But clearly, this has limitations,” he adds. As medical science enables more people to live into old age, the problems associated with the possible incapacity of a leader are likely to become more acute. Dalla Torre observes, “Actually, democratic states could face a similar situation. It is difficult to legislate precisely on all the cases of incapacity of a head of state.”

Finally, asked whether Pope John Paul II will resign, Professor Dalla Torre replies:

I hope his health will improve. Only he can make that decision, with his own strong sense of the Church and his own responsibilities. I don't know whether he has left any instructions on this question. This Pope has been an innovator, who has broken many traditions. If one day it happens, his resignation must be clearly attested as a free act on his part. We cannot have any doubt that this is what he wants

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# Pope makes a public return to the Vatican

## February 10, 2005

Pope John Paul II returned to the Vatican on Thursday evening, after nearly 10 days in Gemelli Hospital, where he was treated for breathing difficulties brought on by the flu.

Surprising reporters who had expected a quiet return in a closed car, the Pontiff rode across the city of Rome in his “popemobile,” sitting under an interior light so that he could clearly be seen, waving to people who crowded the roadsides. The highly visible papal motorcade appeared to be arranged by Vatican officials to allay concerns about the Pope’s health. Witnesses along the route reported that the Pope seemed to be relaxed and alert.

In a statement released in the morning of February 10, Joaquin Navarro-Valls reported: “The acute laryngeal tracheitis that was the reason for urgently admitting the Holy Father to the hospital has healed.” The Pope had also recovered from the flu, the director of the Vatican press office said. “The improvement of his general conditions continues favorably,” and he would return to his apartment in the apostolic palace on Thursday.

The Vatican has not yet released any information about the Pope’s schedule for coming weeks. “On his return to the Vatican, the Pope will his agenda, talk with medical personnel, and decide what he can do,” Navarro-Valls told reporters. The papal spokesman indicated that no decision had been made as to whether or not the Pontiff would address his regular public audience on Sunday, February 13.

Pope John Paul had originally been scheduled to make an appearance on February 11, at ceremonies in St. Peter’s Basilica for the World Day of the Sick. Earlier this week, Navarro-Valls had refused to exclude the possibility that the Pope might keep that appointment, although other Vatican officials felt it quite unlikely. The Pope’s next scheduled public appearance, apart from his Sunday audience, would be the Mass in the Vatican basilica to inaugurate the annual Lenten retreat, which begins on February 13 and runs through February 19.

According to Navarro-Valls, the Pope’s health has improved steadily in the past few days. He added that hospital personnel performed several “diagnostic exams, including a

CAT scan,” and ruled out fears of any other serious illness.

The Vatican spokesman revealed that the Pope was planning to send “a letter of thanks to all the people who have taken care of him these days: doctors, sisters, nurses, technicians, and aides.” Special thanks were offered to Dr. Rodolfo Proietti, director of emergency services at Gemelli Hospital; and three specialists who treated the Pontiff: Drs. Massimo Antonelli, Gaetano Paludetti, and Filippo Crea.

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# Pope must persevere, African cardinal says

## February 10, 2005

As Catholic prepared for ceremonies marking the World Day for the Sick in Yaounde, Cameroon, the host archbishop said that Pope John Paul II should remain in office despite his illness.

Cardinal Christian Tumi of Douala said that the Holy Father has become a worldwide example of courage and an inspiration for the elderly. "I think that the Pope has to persevere, despite his suffering," he said. The cardinal added: "For us, here in Africa, the chief cannot resign."

Cardinal Tumi spoke to reporters on the eve of the World Day for the Sick ceremonies, which are being held in Cameroon this year. The annual observance coincides with the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The cardinal remarked that the increasing difficulty that the Pope experiences in speaking must cause severe suffering. As he put it, "the silence of a pastor who has traveled across the entire world to proclaim the Gospel, in season and out of season, whether he is heard or not, must cost him a great deal." But he added that as long as the Pope remains mentally alert, he can continue to lead the Church.

Cardinal Tumi said that all of the participants at the three-day meeting in Yaounde would be praying for the Pope's health and perseverance. He observed that a time when "the world seems to have forgotten Africa," the faithful on that continent have always felt assured the John Paul II cares for their needs.

In his message for this year's observance of the World Day for the Sick, which was made public last September, the Pope called for new efforts to fight the spread of the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

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# Pope sends his sympathy to the sick

## February 11, 2005

Pope John Paul II sent a message to participants in the World Day for the Sick ceremonies in St. Peter's Basilica on February 11, assuring them of his personal affection and asking the sick to offer their sufferings for the welfare of the universal Church.

The Holy Father had originally been scheduled to attend the ceremonies in the Vatican basilica. But when he was hospitalized on February 1, all of his public appearances were cancelled. When the Pope was released from Gemelli Hospital in the evening of February 10, Vatican officials told reporters that they could not yet be certain whether or not he would attend the event.

Those questions were answered when Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the principal celebrant of the Mass for the sick, read the Pope's message to the congregation. The cardinal announced that the Pontiff was following the ceremony by television from his apartment in the apostolic palace.

In his message, the Pope indicated that he counted on the support of the sick, who by offering up their suffering as a sacrifice, offer invaluable aid to the Church—and, as John Paul pointed out, to the Pope personally. The Holy Father urged the sick to “unite their pains to the sufferings of Christ.” By that means, he said, they can “be privileged cooperators in the salvation of souls.”

Suffering is “never useless,” the Pope continued. It is a part of the mysterious plan of God for the redemption of mankind.

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# Pope John Paul and the sick: a special bond

## February 11, 2005

Pope John Paul II, who addressed a message of sympathy and encouragement to the sick people of the world today, has always enjoyed a special rapport with the sick, the elderly, and the suffering.

At the age of 84, and having just emerged from the 7th hospital stay of his pontificate, John Paul II now can be described as sick and elderly himself. But even during the first years of his papacy, when he was a robust and energetic man, he showed great sympathy for the sick.

The young Karol Wojtyla became acquainted with disease early in life. He was only 8 when his mother Emilia died of kidney and heart problems; three years later his older brother Edmund also died.

Although generally enjoying exuberant and athletic good health, the young Wojtyla also knew physical pain and debility. In addition to the common suffering of wartime Poland, he also spent two weeks in a hospital in 1944, when he was 23, after being struck by a German truck.

The pontificate of John Paul II began with a hospital visit—on the day following his election—to meet with an old Polish friend, Bishop (now Cardinal) Andrei Maria Deskur. After speaking with his colleague, the Pope then remained to visit with others in the hospital, causing a sensation and winning the hearts of the sick. Visits to hospital patients became a regular feature of the Pope's frequent foreign travels.

John Paul II was hospitalized for the first time during his papacy on May 13, 1981, when he was shot and nearly killed by a would-be assassin in St. Peter's Square. As he recovered, the Pontiff spoke to the faithful from his room in Gemelli Hospital, urging the sick of the world to join with him in uniting their suffering with that of Christ.

The Pope has also shown a special care for the elderly, and his Lenten message for this year emphasized the duty of all Christians to treat elderly people with respect and sympathy.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35220>

# Pope asks faithful for prayers

## February 14, 2005

Pope John Paul II reminded the faithful that he needs the help of their prayers, at his public audience on Sunday, February 13.

Speaking to the crowd in St. Peter's Square from the window of his apartment in the apostolic palace, in his first public appearance since being hospitalized for respiratory problems on February 1, the Holy Father also appealed for the release of an Italian journalist who was taken hostage in Iraq.

The Pope's message was read to the crowd by Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, the deputy Secretary of State. But John Paul II himself gave the blessing, and concluded the audience by saying, "I wish everyone a happy Sunday." The Pope's voice was clear and understandable, although his breathing was labored.

The Pope's message began with thanks for all those who had prayed for him during his stay in Gemelli Hospital. "I always feel the need for your help before the Lord, in order to carry out the mission that Jesus has entrusted to me," he said.

The crowd in St. Peter's Square was unusually large for a February audience, as many people had come with concerns about the Pope's physical condition and his ability to continue in office. The Pontiff's message left no doubt that he plans to continue serving until his death.

Reflecting on the importance of "interior struggle" during the season of Lent, the Pope asked for special prayers as he and the members of the Roman Curia begin their annual Lenten Retreat. "In silence and meditation I will pray to the Lord for all the needs of the Church and of the world," he said.

Finally the Pope said that he continues to pray for peace in the Middle East, and he made a "heartfelt appeal for the liberation of the Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, and of all those kidnapped in Iraq."

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# Pope's presence doubtful for Mass ending Retreat

## February 15, 2005

Vatican officials are uncertain whether or not Pope John Paul II will preside at the February 19 Mass to conclude the annual Lenten Retreat.

In a message sent out on February 15, the Vatican's liturgical office invited all the bishops of the Roman Curia to concelebrate the Mass. The invitation did not specify whether the Pope would participate in the ceremonies—as his schedule had originally indicated that he would.

As usual, the principal celebrant for the Mass closing the Lenten Retreat will be the preacher selected by the Pope to lead the spiritual exercises: in this case, Bishop Renato Corti. The bishop will also deliver the homily. Pope John Paul was scheduled only to give the final blessing at the conclusion of the ceremony. Because of his fragile health, there is some question whether he can move to the Vatican basilica for the liturgical celebration.

In the 26 years of his pontificate, John Paul II has never missed participating in the Lenten Retreat. This year, however, informed sources report that he has not actually attended the first meditations, preached by Bishop Corti in the Redemptoris Mater chapel of the apostolic palace; instead he has followed the meditations from his own room, by closed-circuit television. The Pope's medical condition has been followed closely by journalists in Rome since his emergency hospitalization on February 1. Because he returned from the hospital just before the beginning of the Lenten Retreat, and had no public appearances scheduled this week, Vatican-watchers have had no way to gauge his recovery.

Papal aides say that the Holy Father's schedule in coming weeks will be determined by the pace of his recovery. Decisions about the Pope's participation in various events may be made at the last moment, they say, after consultation with medical personnel and particularly with Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, the personal physician to the Pontiff.

If his health allows him to resume normal duties, the Pope is scheduled to meet with Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader on February 22 and with President Ilham Aliiev of Azerbaijan on February 26. His next weekly public audience is set for Wednesday,

February 23.

Pope John Paul has not held a Wednesday audience yet this month; his unexpected hospitalization forced the suspension of the February 2 audience, and the February 9 audience was superseded by Ash Wednesday services in St. Peter's Basilica—which the Pope was not able to attend.

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# Pope still recuperating, doctor reports

## February 16, 2005

Pope John Paul II will need a period of convalescence after his 9-day hospital stay in early February, according to a doctor who handled the Pontiff's treatment.

Dr. Rodolfo Proietti, the director of emergency services at Gemelli Hospital, told the Italian daily *Avvenire* that the Pope was in "good general condition" when he returned to the Vatican on February 10, he would still need a period of recovery. Proietti explained: "It is well known that after an acute inflammation, the body needs a little time to regain its full energy. The Pope is no exception to that rule."

When he was hospitalized on February 1, suffering from acute breathing difficulty, the Pope was assigned directly to the emergency-services team at Gemelli Hospital. He remained an "emergency" patient throughout his 9-day stay there. But Dr. Proietti told *Avvenire* that the Pope's recovery, after initial treatment, was faster than expected. Once the Pope received treatment for his breathing difficulties, the doctor said, medical personnel never had any doubt that he would recover.

Proietti said there was "no mystery" about the Pope's medical problems. He was hospitalized, the doctor said, because of spasms of his larynx and trachea. He was treated, the doctor continued, with the understanding that the Pope was "a man of 84 years, with prior problems, but a very strong temperament."

Prior to Dr. Proietti's conversation with *Avvenire*, all medical bulletins about the Pope's condition had been released by the Vatican press office; the personnel of Gemelli Hospital made no public remarks. The doctor said that this policy was the result of "a mutual agreement." Once the Vatican issued information about the Pope's condition, he said, "we had nothing to add." Since his return to the Vatican, Pope John Paul has been seen in public only once, in his brief appearance at the window of his apartment during the Angelus audience on Sunday, February 13. He has not attended the annual Lenten Retreat, although he has followed the proceedings by closed-circuit television; Vatican officials are still unsure whether or not the Pontiff will attend the Mass closing that retreat on February 19.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35307>

# Cardinal Sodano to replace Pope at Saturday Mass

## February 18, 2005

Cardinal Angelo Sodano will preside at a Mass on February 19, closing the annual Lenten Retreat at the Vatican.

Although the Holy Father was originally scheduled to preside at the Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, the Pontiff is still recuperating slowly from the several breathing difficulties that caused his hospitalization earlier this month.

Informed sources report that, for the first time in his pontificate, John Paul II has not attended the sessions of the Lenten Retreat, which has been held in the Redemptoris Mater chapel of the apostolic palace. Instead the Pope has followed the meditations from his room, by closed-circuit television.

"We don't know whether the Pope will be at the Mass," one official of the Vatican's liturgical office disclosed. But the announcement that Cardinal Sodano will preside seems to suggest that the Pope will not appear. Bishop Renato Corti, who preached the Lenten Retreat, will be the principal celebrant and homilist, in accordance with the regular practice at the Vatican.

Cardinal Sodano has written to the heads of all the offices at the Vatican, urging them to attend the Mass closing the annual spiritual exercises. Earlier the liturgical office had issued the same invitation to all Vatican employees. Many offices will be closed on Saturday morning—ordinarily work hours at the Vatican—so that officials can participate in the Mass.

The next scheduled public appearance by Pope John Paul II would be on Sunday, February 20, for his regular Angelus audience. The Holy Father did make a brief appearance on the previous Sunday, February 13, before the Lenten Retreat began.

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# Pope accepts April invitation from Italian president

## February 18, 2005

Pope John Paul II has accepted an invitation from Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, the president of the Italian republic, for a formal visit at the Quirinal Palace on April 29, the feast of St. Catherine of Siena, patron saint of Italy.

The Holy Father has not made any official appearances outside the Vatican since December 8, when in accordance with tradition he paid a visit to the statue of the Immaculate Conception at the foot of the Spanish Steps in Rome. Since that time he has continued to meet with political leaders, but always at the Vatican.

Although all papal audiences were suspended at the beginning of February, when he contracted a flu that eventually led to his 9-day hospitalization, his schedule for the coming weeks is now filling up, with a number of official appearances on the agenda.

Carlo Azeglio Ciampi was elected in 1999 as the Italian head of state, and made his first official visit to the Vatican to meet with the Holy Father in October of that year. The two men—both now 84 years old—soon established a friendly rapport. Ciampi was among the many world leaders who sent his sympathies to Pope John Paul when he was hospitalized, just as the Pontiff had sent his own encouragement to Ciampi when the Italian leader was forced to undergo surgery last October.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35359>



# Mixed signals on Pope's health recovery

## February 21, 2005

Pope John Paul II, still recuperating from severe respiratory problems that caused his hospitalization earlier this month, will not hold his regular weekly public audience on Wednesday, February 23, the Vatican has announced.

In a terse statement released February 21, the Vatican press office indicated that “the Holy Father will appear at the window of his private study to greet and bless the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square,” rather holding the usual audience. A Wednesday audience can last for up to two hours, during which the Pope delivers a prepared talk (frequently read by an aide in recent month) and greets pilgrims. Apparently Pope John Paul is still not sufficiently recovered for that effort.

Vatican-watchers have been anxiously waiting for the Pope to resume his normal schedule of public audiences since February 1, when the Vatican announced that papal audiences would be suspended while the Pope recovered from a bout with the flu. Although John Paul II places a high priority on his regular meetings with pilgrims in St. Peter’s square, his last Wednesday public audience was on January 26.

Pope John Paul did appear to the public on Sunday, February 20, for his Angelus audience, and read the entirety of a 17-line message; it was his first public appearance since his return from Gemelli Hospital on February 10. However, the Pope did not lead the Angelus prayer himself; the deputy Secretary of State, Archbishop Leonard Sandri, performed that function in his place.

On Saturday, February 19, the Pope resumed meeting with Church officials, in a sign that his recovery was progressing. On that day he met privately with Bishop Renato Corti of Novara, Italy, who had just finished preaching the annual Lenten Retreat at the Vatican (see separate story). The Pontiff also met with Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly later in the day. On Monday morning he met with 6 Spanish bishops who were making their ad limina visit to Rome.

However, on the advice of his doctors, the Pope has not yet resumed public appearances. In order to save his strength, the Pope did not participate in the long Mass closing the Lenten Retreat on Saturday; it was the first time in his pontificate that he has

not presided at that occasion. Nevertheless, the Pope's unflagging determination to resume regular activities was in evidence when he accepted an invitation from from Italian President Carlo Azelgio Ciampi to make a formal visit at the Quirinal Palace on April 29.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35387>

# Protective screen installed to protect Pope from cold during audiences

## February 22, 2005

Vatican workers have installed a transparent panel in the window of the papal apartments, to protect Pope John Paul II from the cold during public appearances.

The panel—apparently of plexiglass or some similar material—was installed on February 22. It covers roughly three-fourths of the window on the third floor of the apostolic palace, at which the Pope frequently appears to greet people below in St. Peter's Square.

Earlier this week, the Vatican press office indicated that instead of his regular weekly public audience on Wednesday, the Pope would offer his blessing from the window of his apartment. The new protective panel was installed in time for that appearance.

During his last public appearance before his hospitalization, his Angelus audience on January 30, the Holy Father spent an unusually long time at his window. Some observers believe that the chilly weather on that day might have aggravated the flu which the Pontiff had already contracted. Since his return from the hospital, several Italian journalists had written to recommend the installation of a protective panel—a step that was taken in the past for Pope Paul VI.

During his most recent public appearance—his Angelus audience on Sunday, February 20, the Pontiff was able to read the entirety of his short message without any sign of difficulty. But while he seems gradually to be recovering from the effects of the severe respiratory problems that prompted his hospitalization, his aides and doctors are clearly doing everything possible to avoid a relapse.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35435>

# The Second Crisis: February 23-28

# Cardinal Sodano substitutes for ailing Pope at consistory

## February 24, 2005

Cardinal Angelo Sodano presided today at a consistory of cardinals to hear decrees regarding candidates for canonization.

Pope John Paul II had been scheduled to preside, but asked the Vatican Secretary of State to take his place. In a message that Cardinal Sodano read aloud to the consistory, the Pope said that he would follow the proceedings by closed-circuit television, from his apartment in the apostolic palace.

Shortly after the consistory, Pope John Paul was taken to Gemelli Hospital for treatment of a recurrence of respiratory problems.

The cardinals assembled in the Clementine Hall, and reporters attending the consistory, were alarmed when Cardinal Sodano announced that the Pope had asked him to preside at the meeting. “For reasons of prudence,” the Pope’s message read, “I have been advised” not to attend the meeting.

The Pope instructed Cardinal Sodano to announce that he had set the date of October 23, 2005, for the canonization of Jozef Bilczewski, Gaetano Catanoso, Zygmunt Gorazdowski, Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga, and Felice Da Nicosia.

In other formal business during the consistory, the Pope conferred new titles on several cardinals.

An ordinary consistory is a meeting of all the cardinals who are present in Rome at the time. Such meetings are held to witness and approve formal decrees of the sort issued today.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35486>

# Pope hospitalized again

## February 24, 2005

Pope John Paul II has been hospitalized once again.

The Holy Father, who was released from Gemelli Hospital on February 10 after a 9-day stay caused by respiratory problems, returned to the hospital in the morning of February 24.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the Pope “showed signs of a relapse of the flu syndrome which had affected him” earlier in the month. He said that the Pope was hospitalized for “specialized treatment and for further tests.”

The flu symptoms began to return on Wednesday afternoon, February 23, Navarro-Valls told reporters. The decision that the Pope should return to the hospital was made at mid-morning on Thursday.

The Pontiff had been hospitalized hurriedly on February 1, when the flu flared up, causing him severe difficulty in breathing. After treatment, the respiratory problems eased, and the Pope seemed to be recovering from the flu when he returned to the Vatican on February 10.

However, officials were taking extra precautions to protect the Pontiff’s health. John Paul II had sharply cut back his schedule; for the first time in his 26-year pontificate he did not attend the Lenten Retreat at the Vatican, following the proceedings by closed-circuit television instead. On February 23, in another unprecedented move, the Pope addressed his regular weekly public audience by television, sitting in the library of his apartments rather than coming to the window, as expected, to greet the crowd.

Nevertheless, Vatican officials had expected the Pontiff to resume public activities this week. He met on February 22 with Croatian President Ivo Sanader, and he was expected to preside at a consistory of cardinals on February 24, for a vote on candidates for canonization.

When Pope John Paul failed to appear for that consistory, which took place late in the morning, his absence revived the fears of journalists covering the event. (Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, presided in the Pope’s place.) Shortly after that late-morning meeting, Navarro-Valls revealed that the Pope had returned to the hospital.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35484>

# Successful surgery for Pope

## February 24, 2005

Pope John Paul II underwent successful surgery on Thursday evening to relieve respiratory problems, the Vatican has announced.

Surgeons at Gemelli Hospital performed a tracheotomy on the Pontiff, after he was hospitalized for the second time in three weeks because of difficulty breathing.

When the Holy Father returned to the hospital late in the morning of February 24, the Vatican press office explained that he was suffered from renewed symptoms of the flu that had originally sidelined him at the end of January, and eventually provoked the respiratory spasms that caused his emergency hospitalization on February 1.

In the evening, after the surgery, the Vatican released a second statement, saying that the flu had precipitated acute respiratory problems, caused by a tightening of the larynx. A tracheotomy was therefore performed by Drs. Gaetano Plaudetti and Angelo Camaioni, forming a clear path to the lungs. The surgery took place between 8:20 and 8:50 in the evening.

The Vatican reported that the surgery was successful, the Pope's post-operative condition was deemed satisfactory, and he would stay the night in Gemelli Hospital.

A tracheotomy involves cutting a hole in the trachea, or windpipe, and inserting a tube through the patient's neck to enable the passage of air. The procedure is necessary when some obstruction—in this case, a constricted larynx—makes it difficult or impossible to breathe.

The Pope's respiratory problems, triggered by the flu, are aggravated by the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, which has hardened the musculature around his chest, neck, and throat, making his breathing more laborious.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35496>



# Analysis: the Pope's declining health

## February 25, 2005

When Pope John Paul II was taken by ambulance to the Gemelli Hospital on February 24—for his 2nd hospital stay of the month, and the 10th of his pontificate—the Vatican press office sought to ease public fears, with an announcement that the Pope was suffering a relapse of the flu. But the Vatican press corps is convinced that the problem is more serious.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Pope's vicar for the Rome diocese, hinted at the urgency of the Pope's condition when he issued a new call for the people of Rome to pray for the Pope's health. Cardinal Ruini instructed “all the parishes, religious communities and monasteries, individuals and families, to ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, to protect the Pope again, and preserve him in his mission for the good of Rome, the Church, and mankind.”

Although the Vatican announcement indicated that the Pope's problem was the flu, a more serious concern is the difficulty that he has experienced in breathing. Suffering from the advanced symptoms of Parkinson's disease, John Paul II is now extremely vulnerable to respiratory difficulties. With the muscles of his chest and abdomen stiffened, under the best of circumstances he has some trouble breathing; an infection could be disastrous. Experienced Vatican-watchers note that the Holy Father's health seems to have been deteriorating since the beginning of 2005. While he began January with the usual traditional public audiences, exchanging New Year's greetings with various groups, John Paul II had distinct difficulty in speaking, and his breathing was frequently labored.

On January 30, in the last public audience before his latest illness, the Pope stood at the window of his apartment, flanked by two young members of Italian Catholic Action, to release doves into St. Peter's Square. When the doves balked at flying from the window, a laughing Pope waved his arm in mock disgust—giving the world a memorable image that would linger after he fell ill the next day.

On January 31, the Vatican announced that all papal audiences had been suspended because John Paul was suffering from the flu. That announcement caused no special alarm. Reporters had noticed that the Pope's chest seemed to be congested during his

audience the previous day. And the papal spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, offered a reassuring signal by noting that the Pope had received his copy of the new Vatican yearbook, the *Annuario Pontificio*—an indication that although he was confined to his bed, the Pope was able to sit up and greet visitors. This was not the first occasion on which the Pope’s schedule had been disrupted by an ordinary illness; in September 2003 his weekly audience was canceled because of an “intestinal indisposition” from which the Pontiff soon recovered.

The following day, concerns mounted slightly with the announcement that the Pope would not hold his weekly public audience on Wednesday. And that night, the gravity of the situation became apparent when the Pontiff was rushed to Gemelli Hospital, suffering from acute respiratory problems. The next day, Navarro-Valls was again issuing reassuring messages, telling reporters that the Pope had rested comfortably after receiving emergency treatment. On February 3 he reported that the Pope’s flu symptoms were receding, and his recovery proceeding on schedule, with no recurrence of the respiratory spasms that had prompted his hospitalization. To underline the sense of normalcy, the Vatican press office announced on Friday, February 4, that there would be no medical bulletins about the Pope’s condition over the weekend.

John Paul II made a special effort to greet the public on Sunday, February 6, appearing at the window of his room on the 10th floor of the Gemelli Hospital to give his blessing at noon, the time when he would typically lead the Angelus in St. Peter’s Square. After Archbishop Leonardo Sandri led the prayer, and delivered a prepared text on behalf of the Holy Father, the Pope gave his apostolic blessing, relayed by an audio-visual hookup to pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

If Vatican officials had hoped that the Pope’s appearance would ease fears about his physical condition, their hopes were shattered when Italian journalists reported that when he said the few words of blessing, the Pope’s voice was weak, his breathing shallow, and his words nearly indistinguishable. Some reporters charged that Vatican officials had hurriedly dubbed an old recording of the Pope’s voice into the Sunday broadcast, so that he could be heard clearly at the end of the blessing.

However, the Pontiff’s overall condition continued to improve, and on February 7 the medical bulletin announced that he no longer had a fever. He would remain in the hospital “for obvious reasons of prudence,” the Vatican press office said.

On that same day, Cardinal Angelo Sodano observed that Pope John Paul could govern the Church even if he lost his capacity for speech. The Vatican Secretary of State, pressed by reporters on the question of whether the Pope would resign, answered that the Holy Father should be left to follow his own conscience. Those comments—remarkably

candid, by comparison with the highly guarded language that usually dominates Vatican statements—again called attention to the seriousness of the Pope’s condition. On February 9, for the first time in his 26-year pontificate, Pope John Paul failed to preside at Ash Wednesday services to open the season of Lent. And although he left the hospital on February 10—returning to the Vatican by “popemobile,” so that the people of Rome could see him sitting up and waving—he did not attend ceremonies for the World Day of the Sick the following day.

The Pope returned to the Vatican in time for a week in which he had no scheduled public appearances; his schedule had already been cleared for the annual Lenten Retreat. But John Paul did not attend the spiritual exercises, held in the Redemptoris Mater chapel of the apostolic palace; he remained in his apartment, following the proceedings by closed-circuit television.

On February 19, as the Lenten Retreat ended, the Pope held his first official audiences of the month; he greeted Bishop Renato Corti, who had preached the retreat; and Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly, who reported on the latest developments in Iraq. By Sunday, February 20, the Pope seemed well along the road to recovery. He held a short Angelus audience, but read his own brief message without apparent difficulty, speaking in a hoarse but distinctly audible voice. And on February 22 he held his first meeting of the month with a visiting dignitary: Croatian President Ivo Sanader—although reporters noticed that the Pope said only a few words during their public exchange of greetings.

On Wednesday, February 22, John Paul II was due to address the public from his apartment window, in lieu of the usual weekly public audience. Vatican officials had installed a transparent screen across that window to protect the Pope from the cold winter wind—a move that represented a significant concession on the part of the Pope, who had previously resisted the idea of putting any barrier between himself and the public. Nevertheless, when the time for the audience came, the Pope did not appear at the window. Instead, in another unprecedented move, he spoke from the library of the apostolic palace, with a video connection to giant screens in St. Peter’s Square. Still, it was the Pope’s longest public appearance since January, and although he spoke only briefly and with some difficulty, he appeared relaxed and alert.

On the following morning, February 24, reporters were alarmed by the Pope’s failure to appear at a consistory of cardinals. Their fears were confirmed when, shortly after the event, Navarro-Valls confirmed that John Paul II had been hospitalized once again.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35485>

# Pope silenced for “several days” during recovery

## February 25, 2005

Pope John Paul II will not attempt to speak for “several days,” on the advice of his doctors, the Vatican has announced.

The Pope is resting comfortably and recovering well after his Thursday-night tracheotomy, according to Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office. He is communicating with aides by writing notes.

Vatican officials have not yet determined what provisions will be made for papal audiences. And after briefing reporters, Navarro-Valls indicated that he did not expect to release any further medical information until Monday, February 28.

The Pope slept well after the surgery, and ate a full breakfast on Friday morning, the Vatican spokesman reported. But he said that doctors had advised the Pontiff not to attempt to speak, giving his larynx time to recover from the spasms that had troubled him.

Navarro-Valls emphasized that the Pope’s surgery was elective; the Pope consented to the procedure on the doctors’ recommendation. He assured reporters that “it was not an emergency procedure.” The surgery was a success, relieving the “acute respiratory insufficiency” that John Paul II had experienced, and the Pope is now breathing without assistance.

Although on Thursday he had said that the Pope’s second trip to the hospital was caused by a recurrence of flu symptoms, the papal spokesman explained that the Pontiff was not running a fever. He stressed, too, that there was no sign of respiratory infection. The problem, he said, was simply a severe difficulty in breathing, due to spasms of the larynx.

The Vatican press office said that the Pope’s personal secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, was conferring with doctors and with the Pope himself, to decide what plans could be made for papal audiences. The announcement said any such plans would be divulged “in a timely fashion.”

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# Pope expected to miss Sunday audience

## February 26, 2005

Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, the Vatican's deputy Secretary of State, will stand in for Pope John Paul II at his regular public audience on Sunday, February 27.

Barring a change in plans, the Holy Father is not expected to make any appearance. This would be the first time during his 26-year pontificate that Pope John Paul has not delivered the blessing at the Angelus audience.

Pope John Paul remains in Gemelli Hospital, after successful surgery to relieve severe respiratory problems. In a February 26 announcement, the Vatican press office indicated that the Pope would join in praying the Angelus, from his hospital room, as Archbishop Sandri led the faithful in prayer in St. Peter's Square at midday on Sunday.

During his previous hospital stay, earlier in February, the Pope came to the window of his room on the 10th floor of Gemelli Hospital to give his blessing to the crowd during the Angelus audience. The Vatican's announcement on February 26 did not mention any plans for a similar appearance. However, giant video screens are on hand in St. Peter's Square, and a surprise appearance by the Pope is possible. The Vatican announcement seemed clearly to indicate that the Pope would not appear, even by television. The press office informed reporters that Archbishop Sandri would read a message from the Pope at the Sunday audience, and give the apostolic blessing in the Pope's name.

For the past several months, Archbishop Sandri has frequently read public messages by Pope John Paul. In some cases the Pope has handed over a prepared text, after reading a few lines himself; in other cases the archbishop has read the entire message. During the early weeks of 2005, as the Pope's difficulties in speech have become more pronounced, Archbishop Sandri has taken on a more prominent role at papal audiences.

On February 6, when Pope John Paul appeared at the window of his hospital room for the Angelus audience, it was Archbishop Sandri who read the Pope's weekly message. The Pope then gave his blessing, in a hoarse and halting voice. But after his return from the hospital, on February 20, John Paul II surprised many observers by delivering the full text of his own address at the Angelus audience.

Archbishop Sandri holds the office of *sostituto*, or deputy, to the Secretary of State,

Cardinal Angelo Sodano. His office controls most of the day-to-day paperwork of administering the Holy See, making the Argentine prelate one of the most influential figures at the Vatican. The *sostituto* is one of two deputies; the other, the Secretary for Relations with States (currently Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo), is in effect the Vatican's foreign minister.

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# Brief papal appearance at hospital window

## February 27, 2005

Pope John Paul II came to the window of his hospital room to wave to the public on Sunday, after missing an Angelus audience for the first time in his 26-year pontificate.

On Saturday, a Vatican announcement had indicated that the Pope would join in praying the Angelus, from his hospital room. But the announcement said that Archbishop Leonardo Sandri would lead the Angelus, and deliver the blessing in the Pope's name. There was no indication that the Pope would make any appearance.

This was the first time since his papal election in October 1978 that John Paul II had not taken a public role in the Sunday audience. Ordinarily he leads the praying of the Angelus, delivers a short message, and gives his blessing. In recent months, because of his difficulty in speaking, he has often allowed an aide to read the bulk of his prepared message. And on February 6, during his previous hospital stay, the Pope let Archbishop Sandri lead the Angelus, but still gave his apostolic blessing—in a halting voice—from the window of his room in Gemelli Hospital.

But although his public appearance was not expected today, the Pope did come to the window, flanked by Cardinal Angelo Sodano and his Polish secretary, Msgr. Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki. He waved to the cheering crowd below, and made a few gestures of blessing.

The Pope's appearance from the hospital was not shown in St. Peter's Square during the Angelus audience. There, visitors saw older images of a young John Paul II on the giant screens set up for the weekly audience.

"The sovereign Pontiff is not with us, but he is following us from the Gemelli," Archbishop Sandri said as the audience at the Vatican began. The deputy Secretary of State told the small crowd, "He is offering his prayers and sufferings for the world and all mankind, and those of us in St. Peter's Square will pray with him and for him."

Archbishop Sandri later read a message from the Pope, thanking the faithful for their support, and urging them to continue in prayer. The Pope's message went on to say that the Lenten spirit of penance "helps us better to understand the value of the suffering that, in one way or another, touches all of us."

The Pope concluded his message by renewing his pledge of devotion to the Virgin Mary, repeating his papal motto: *Totus tuus*. In briefing reporters on February 25 about the Pope's surgical operation, papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls reported that the Pontiff had written the same phrase, *Totus tuus*, on a pad of paper soon after regaining consciousness.

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# Pope recovering, but doctors voice concerns

## February 27, 2005

Pope John Paul II was reported resting comfortably on Friday, after surgery the previous evening. But doctors are extremely cautious about his prospects for recovery.

The Holy Father ate a normal breakfast in his room at Gemelli Hospital on February 25, joking with aides about his operation.

Dr. Bruno Bergamasco, a specialist on Parkinson's disease at the University of Turin, observed that the Pope's hospitalization twice this month is a clear sign of deterioration in his immune system. He told the Italian daily *La Stampa* that the greatest risk now is a pulmonary infection, which could be fatal. Dr. Corrado Manni, a member of the Gemelli staff, added that problems of the circulatory system are also a danger.

However, Dr. Henrik Thielen, a German surgeon, observed that the tracheotomy performed on the Pope Thursday night should significantly ease the strain on his respiratory system, making it easier for him to breathe and thus protecting him from other dangers.

Dr. Bergamasco observed that the Pope's failure to overcome the flu showed a weakness in his immune system, and noted that the flu is a leading cause of death among the victims of Parkinson's disease. Dr. Manni observed that in both cases when the Pope was hospitalized this month, the fundamental problem was a failure of the respiratory system. Such failures can trigger health problems, he added. Pope John Paul has had great difficulty in speaking for the past several months, and frequently has shown shortness of breath. "You can see that the Pope, when he speaks in public, takes advantage of applause to regain his breath," Dr. Manni pointed out. "During the applause, for 10 seconds of silence, he takes a deep breath." That pattern is typical for a Parkinson's victim, he said.

The symptoms of Parkinson's disease include a tightening and obstruction of the muscles around the face and throat, impeding breathing. The tracheotomy should ease those problems.

However, Dr. Manni continued, the Pope now shows "the fatigue of a body that is undoubtedly weakened." He said that John Paul II would have to accept a severely

curtailed schedule of activities—an adjustment that the Pontiff might find extremely difficult. Dr. Thielen, on the other hand, said that he was “much more reassured” by the news that the Pope was recovering satisfactorily after the Thursday operation. The fact that John Paul was breathing without mechanical assistance was a positive sign, he said. The tracheotomy would make it extremely difficult for the Pontiff to speak, he said; but mechanical devices might be able to overcome that problem. For the moment, the German doctor said, he was happy to say with confidence that “the Pope will survive.”

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# French leader lauds Pope's spiritual leadership

February 28, 2005

The French political leader François Bayrou sees the illness of Pope John Paul II as a message to the Church and the world about the dignity of suffering.

Bayrou, the head of the Union for French Democracy (UDF), observed that the Pope's infirmity reminds Christians "that the dignity and meaning of life do not end with youth and good health."

The UDF leader, who was on hand at Lourdes for the Pope's visit there in August 2004, said that the deterioration of the Pontiff's health "evoques the Way of the Cross," which is especially striking for those who recall the Pope as a young and vigorous man. "Life is a unity, and all of its stages—including the sad ones—contribute to it," he said.

Bayrou indicated that he sees the Pope as remaining an effective Church leader, despite his infirmity. "For me, the Church is not a temporal power," he said. "The 'power' of the Church is in the spiritual domain, and it is wrong to look at it as if it were a secular government, in which this sort of weakness would be inconceivable. The Church is a different thing."

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# “Resignation” not in Pope’s vocabulary, prelate says

February 28, 2005

The president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care has said that Pope John Paul II should not be overanxious to return to his regular activities at the Vatican.

Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragan, speaking to the Italian daily *La Repubblica*, said that John Paul II should have no particular difficulty in leading the Church, even if he cannot speak. But he added that it is important for the Pope to recover from surgery and regain strength before he attempts a return to ordinary responsibilities.

“In this phase of convalescences, we have to be prudent, and less hasty,” the cardinal said. Alluding to the fact that the Pope was forced to return to Gemelli Hospital just days after his release earlier this month, he added: “Let’s hope it will go better than the last time.”

Cardinal Barragan told *La Repubblica* that he is astonished how quickly the Pope is recovering from surgery. He said that the latest reports from the hospital are optimistic about the Pope’s prospects, and expressed surprise that the Pope has shown great recuperative powers.

As for the Pope’s ability to continue leading the Church, the Mexican prelate predicted: “He surely will, because he is driven by an incredible strength, an extraordinary will and extraordinary clarity.” Despite his illness, he said, the Pope has the energy of an ordinary man 20 years younger than himself. “The word ‘resignation’ is not part of the Pontiff’s vocabulary,” Cardinal Barragan concluded.

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# Curial official decries calls for Pope's resignation

February 28, 2005

The role of the Roman Pontiff is not like that of a corporate executive, Cardinal Julian Herranz has reminded the media.

Reacting sharply against calls for the Pope's resignation, the Vatican's top canon-law official told an Italian newspaper that "one thing that public opinion has unfortunately failed to realize is that the Church is not a multinational company like Coca-Cola or General Motors."

Speaking to the Italian daily *La Stampa*, Cardinal Herranz observed: "The Church is a multinational, but a multinational guided by the Holy Spirit." Therefore, he cautioned, anyone who looks upon the Pope's role in terms of corporate management alone is likely to fall into error.

"If you evaluate the situation in purely human terms, you see a great enterprise guided by an old, sick man," the Spanish cardinal conceded. But from the perspective of the Christian Church, that old man "is carrying out a great evangelizing mission, showing that in a world that only seems to appreciate youth and strength and beauty and power and hedonism and wealth, that old age and sickness also have value."

Even in his weakened condition, Pope John Paul "can speak to the hearts of as just as many people as when he was young and strong," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Herranz said that Pope John Paul has a very clear sense of his own divine mandate to continue leading the Church. For that reason, he continued, despite occasional public calls for the Pope's resignation, "we who are his collaborators are very calm, because it's clear that the Spirit is at work."

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# Prelate suggests Curia take greater role to aid Pope

February 28, 2005

A retired Vatican official has suggested that the leaders of the Roman Curia should meet more frequently, to coordinate their work and thus ease the burdens on the Pope.

Cardinal Francesco Pompedda, the former prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, made his proposal in an interview with the Italian daily *Il Giornale*. He observed that if the Pope must go through a lengthy convalescence after his surgery, the Vatican agencies that are designed to assist him should take on greater responsibilities.

“The government of the Church is exercised with the help of the organisms that work with the Pope and share in his decision-making responsibility,” the cardinal observed. These offices could make more of their own decisions, working collaboratively, while leaving the most important policy judgments to the Pope, he said.

The offices of the Roman Curia are not highly structured, Cardinal Pompedda noted, and meetings that bring together the heads of the various dicasteries are infrequent. “But nothing prohibits them from taking place, particularly to ease the burden of work that rests on the Pope’s shoulders,” he said. The Italian prelate suggested a new approach, “to adapt to the time and respond to the needs that we see.”

“I don’t see what harm could be done, if certain agencies—which are already in existence—were used more effectively to assist the Pope,” Cardinal Pompedda observed.

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# Pope recovering, may be silenced for weeks

## February 28, 2005

Pope John Paul II is recovering “without complications” after surgery last week, and beginning an exercise program to strengthen his respiratory system, according to a Vatican bulletin released February 28.

“The Holy Father is eating regularly, spends some hours in an armchair, and has begun exercises to rehabilitate breathing,” the Vatican press office announced. The press office added that no further medical bulletins are expected until Thursday, March 3.

During his brief public appearance on Sunday at the window of his room in the Gemelli Hospital, Pope John Paul seemed relaxed and alert. But observers noticed that several times the Pope moved his hand toward his neck—presumably because of the lingering discomfort from a tracheotomy performed two days earlier.

The Vatican has not yet indicated how long the Holy Father might remain in the hospital, or when he is likely to be capable of speaking once again. But in an interview with the daily *Corriere della Sera*, an Italian speech specialist offered some observations on the case. Dr. Giancarlo Cianfrone of Rome’s Sapienza University said that several months could elapse before the Pope can speak normally once again. The tracheotomy tube can be removed once a patient recovers from the respiratory problems that required the operation, Dr. Cianfrone told the newspaper. After the tube is removed, the vocal cords—which are not damaged by the operation—can recover their normal function within a few days.

In the Pope’s case, however, the recovery period may be lengthened because of other health concerns, the doctor speculated. He suggested that the Pope would probably need to go through a regime of rehabilitation in order to begin breathing normally.

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# Lengthening Shadows: March 1- 11

# No papal audience Wednesday

## March 01, 2005

There will be no papal audience on Wednesday, March 2, Vatican officials have confirmed.

With Pope John Paul II still in Gemelli Hospital, where he has been confined since February 24, the Vatican does not plan to have another prelate substitute for the Pontiff.

On one previous occasion, in September 2003, Cardinal Angelo Sodano stood in for John Paul II at a weekly public audience in the Paul VI auditorium, when the Pope was temporarily sidelined by an intestinal ailment. The Vatican Secretary of State read the Pope's prepared text and relayed his greetings to the audience. But even on that occasion the Pope, who was staying at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, gave his blessing by a radio connection.

Pope John Paul has not held his normal Wednesday audience in the Paul VI auditorium since January 26. Last Wednesday, February 23, he did hold an audience, but did not appear personally, speaking instead by closed-circuit television from the library of the apostolic palace.

Speaking to reporters on March 1, Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the Pope's condition is "improving." The papal spokesman said that John Paul II "is a good patient and is continuing his voice exercises." He said that the Holy Father was preparing to celebrate Mass in his hospital room this morning.

The Vatican has not yet offered any indication when the Pope might return to the Vatican. The next medical bulletin on the Pontiff's condition is not expected until Thursday, March 3.

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# Pope is speaking, Cardinal Ratzinger reports

## March 01, 2005

After meeting with Pope John Paul II on March 1, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger reported that the Pontiff was alert and able to speak.

“The Pope spoke with me in German and in Italian,” the German cardinal said. That report contradicted the predictions of doctors who had speculated that the Pontiff might not be able to speak for several days or even weeks.

Cardinal Ratzinger held a working meeting with the Pope, bringing several dossiers to discuss. The prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith regularly meets with the Pontiff once a week; this meeting, in the Pope’s hospital room, lasted about 20 minutes.

As he left the hospital, Cardinal Ratzinger told reporters that he had left the dossiers with the Pope, who was expecting to work in them. Although he tacitly acknowledged that the Holy Father was not speaking normally, he said: “He is capable of saying the things that are essential.”

The Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* indicated in its March 1 edition that Pope John Paul I “is faithful to his prayer, both personal and liturgical.” The Pope celebrates Mass with his priest-secretaries each day in his hospital room, recites the prayers of the Breviary, prays the Rosary, and follows the Way of the Cross each day, the newspaper said.

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# Canadian cardinal dismisses talk of papal resignation

## March 01, 2005

Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte of Montreal says that speculation about a papal resignation leaves him “completely indifferent.”

Cardinal Turcotte, who is in Rome this week for a meeting of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, remarked that when his own father died, “I did not ask him to whom he was leaving his inheritance, and who would take his responsibilities.” Instead, he said, he prayed for him. The Canadian prelate suggested that Christians should take the same approach to the illness of Pope John Paul II.

When pressed on the question of whether a fragile Pope can still lead the Church, Cardinal Turcotte responded positively. “A television agency or a corporation cannot tolerate a chief executive who is sick,” he said. “But the Church is probably the only institution that can provide this witness.” He went on to note that the Catholic Church has survived for centuries, with a hierarchical structure that has withstood the tests of time. If the Pope is not able to carry out some of his usual tasks, he concludes, others will do them.

Cardinal Turcotte reminded reporters that Pope Paul VI was seriously ill for nearly two years before his death, and Pope Pius XII for nearly one year. In both cases, the Church survived without difficulties. Although Pope John Paul II has been highly visible to the public throughout his pontificate, the cardinal argued that he could continue to lead the Church in less prominent fashion.

The Canadian cardinal also rejected the notion that Church leaders are already planning for the election of a new Pope. “I have been a cardinal for more than 10 years,” he said, “and we have never discussed those questions among the cardinals.” He acknowledged that cardinals always discuss the problems that confront the Church, but insisted that the conversation never turns to the question of papal succession. “In English there is a proverb: ‘We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it,’” he said.

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# No papal appearance, despite rumors

## March 02, 2005

Responding to rumors that Pope John Paul II would appear at the window of his hospital room at noon on Wednesday, a large crowd gathered on the street outside Gemelli Hospital as midday approached on March 2. But the Pope did not make an appearance.

The Vatican had announced that the usual weekly papal audience, held each Wednesday at noon, would not take place on March 2. But on the previous Sunday, Pope John Paul had made an unscheduled appearance at his window, waving to the crowd, at the time of the Angelus audience. Some papal supporters in Rome clearly hoped for a repeat appearance today.

With a winter sun shining in Rome, the crowd outside the Gemelli Hospital was upbeat and energetic. Polish pilgrims flourished their red-and-white national colors, while others showed the yellow-and-white of the papacy. A large group of American students from the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, sang hymns. And occasional chants of “John Paul II, we love you,” drew other hospital patients to their windows to wave.

But the blinds on the 10th-floor room where Pope John Paul is staying remained closed. The Pope was reportedly continuing with his rehabilitation exercises to regain control of his voice.

Security officials at the hospital, while careful to avoid public controversy, were beginning to show some signs of frustration with the publicity surrounding the Pope’s stay. Reporters have claimed most of the parking spaces around the hospital, and a forest of cameras is permanently aimed at the Pope’s 10th-floor suite. One hospital official, speaking on condition of anonymity, reminded reporters that the Gemelli staff has other patients needing care, and cannot afford disruptions. But the hospital has taken special steps to accommodate the press—for example, serving hot meals in a temporary cafeteria set up for reporters on the ground floor.

With the Vatican not expected to issue a new medical bulletin until March 4, reporters have sought out expert opinions from other doctors. The question asked most frequently today has been the likely length of the Pope’s hospital stay. Several doctors, speaking to various Italian media outlets, said that the usual hospital stay after a

tracheotomy is 3-4 weeks. Some observers pointed out that the Pope's case could be different, since special care could be arranged in the papal apartments.

The key to the Pope's recovery at this point, doctors agreed, is to avoid the risk of infection after the surgery. And Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, in an open message to the reporters surrounding the hospital, made another point: "Maybe the media should take note that the Pope needs rest."

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# Pope's presence seen key to World Youth Day

## March 02, 2005

Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne has told Pope John Paul II that his presence at World Youth Day celebrations is essential to the success of the event. The German cardinal urged the Holy Father to travel to Germany for the August event, even if he is unable to speak.

Cardinal Meisner visited Pope John Paul in his room at Gemelli Hospital on March 2, and told the Pontiff that the German people, and especially the organizers of World Youth Day, are eagerly anticipating his visit.

The issue of the Pope's ability to speak may become moot long before World Youth Day. After his conversation with the Pope, the cardinal reported that John Paul II spoke to him, in a "much stronger voice" than he had expected to hear. Nevertheless, Cardinal Meisner said that he told the Pope that even if he could not address the young people gathered in Cologne in August, "the presence of the Pope speaks a great deal." When reporters asked for his estimate of when the Pope would be able to leave the hospital, the cardinal brushed off the questions, saying: "I'm not a doctor. I don't know." He added lightly, "I hope he will leave the hospital by August, to be with us in Cologne." The August trip to Cologne is the only foreign trip currently on Pope John Paul's schedule for 2005.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35610>



# Pope still plans trip to World Youth Day

## March 03, 2005

Despite his current illness, Pope John Paul II still hopes to attend World Youth Day festivities in Cologne in August, according to a German organizer of the event.

Heiner Koch, the secretary-general of World Youth Day, revealed that the Pope had expressed his desire to attend the festivities during a March 2 meeting with Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne. The German prelate had told the Pontiff that his presence would be crucial to the success of World Youth Day, and had strongly encouraged him to attend, even if he was unable to speak at the event. The Pope reportedly responded by writing a note to Cardinal Meisner, saying that he planned to attend.

World Youth Day celebrations have always held a high priority for Pope John Paul, and the August trip to Germany is the only foreign visit on the Pope's calendar for 2005. If his health allows him to keep his schedule, he would arrive in Cologne on August 18, and preside at the Mass concluding World Youth Day on August 21. Cardinal Meisner—who is in Rome this week for a meeting of the Congregation for Divine Worship—brought several World Youth Day organizers along with him, to meet with Vatican officials and continue planning for the event. According to Bishop Josef Clemens, the secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, the current expectations are for 800,000 young people to attend the celebration in Cologne.

Bishop Clemens said that although he had not heard directly from Cardinal Meisner, he was not surprised to hear about the Pope's desire to attend the event. But he deflected questions about the possibility that the Pope would not be able to address the crowd, saying that it was "too early to tell" whether the Pontiff's voice would be sufficiently restored by August.

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# Pope's medical condition updated

## March 03, 2005

Pope John Paul II “continues to improve and show progress” in his recovery from surgery, according to a March 3 announcement from the Vatican press office.

The announcement indicated that the Holy Father is eating regularly, sitting up in a chair for “several hours each day,” and doing exercises to recover his capacity to breathe and speak normally.

The Pope has also resumed meetings with other Vatican officials, on a relaxed schedule of one such meeting each day, reported Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

Navarro-Valls told reporters that the medical bulletins he released were prepared by the Gemelli Hospital staff, coordinated by Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, the Pope's personal physician. The papal spokesman said that he did not yet have an indication of when the Pope might leave the hospital. He did say, however, that the next scheduled update on the Pope's physical condition would be issued on Monday, March 7.

Navarro-Valls also sidestepped questions about the Pope's involvement in liturgical ceremonies during Holy Week and Easter. The Vatican's calendar has not been changed, he said, “but the Pope will have to decide on his participation.”

For the coming weekend, Navarro-Valls said that plans for the regular Angelus audience on Sunday would probably follow those for the past week, when Archbishop Leonardo Sandri substituted for the Pope in speaking to the crowd in St. Peter's Square. He promised to confirm those plans on Saturday.

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# Brief papal appearance after Sunday audience

## March 07, 2005

For the second consecutive Sunday, Pope John Paul II did not participate directly in the regular Angelus audience on March 6, but came to the window of his hospital room to give his blessing to the crowd.

Archbishop Leonardo Sandri led the crowd in St. Peter's Square in reciting the Angelus, and read a message from the Holy Father. In that message, the Pontiff thanked the faithful of other religions—especially Jews and Muslims—for their prayers on his behalf during his hospital stay. The Pope said that the many sympathetic messages he had received from other religious leaders during his illness had been “a comforting sign, for which I thank God.” Among the dignitaries from whom the Pope has received messages are Shlomo Amar, the chief rabbi of Israel; Mohamed Nour Dachan, the president of the Islamic Union of Italy; and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II.

The Pope's message to the Angelus audience also alluded to the season of Lent, and urged the faithful to continue “offering even our sufferings to God, for the good of mankind and for our own purification.”

During the audience in St. Peter's Square, John Paul II followed the proceedings by closed-circuit television from his room in the Gemelli Hospital, where he was accompanied by Cardinal Angelo Sodano and Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo. Giant video screens in the square showed images of the Pope—who appeared fatigued but alert—to the crowd at the Vatican.

At the conclusion of the event, the shades were drawn aside on the windows of the Pope's hospital room, and he gave his blessing to the crowd on the street below, smiling but not speaking.

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# Pope's aim: return to Vatican for Holy Week

## March 07, 2005

Pope John Paul II hopes to leave the hospital and return to the Vatican in time for Holy Week, his spokesman reports.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, announced on March 7 that the Holy Father's recovery for surgery is proceeding without complications. The Pope is spending several hours a day in an armchair, he said, while also performing exercises to rehabilitate his voice and his breathing.

The Pope's voice is recovering, Navarro-Valls continued, although John Paul has been advised by doctors to limit his speaking, in order to give his larynx more time to recover.

When asked for a date when the Holy Father might leave the hospital, the Vatican spokesman replied: "The Pope will probably spend Holy Week at the Vatican." Navarro-Valls specified that he was intentionally saying that the Pope would be out of the hospital in time for Holy Week, rather than just for Easter; thus he was pointing to time less than 2 weeks away. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, March 27.

The papal spokesman indicated that he could not yet predict what role the Pope would play in the public liturgical ceremonies of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. The Pope himself will determine what he can do, in consultation with his doctors, Navarro-Valls said.

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# Pope flooded by email support messages

## March 07, 2005

Pope John Paul II received more than 20,000 email messages, offering prayers and support, during the first two days of March, the Vatican has reported.

An email address for the Holy Father—[john\\_paul\\_ii@vatican.va](mailto:john_paul_ii@vatican.va)—was posted on the Vatican's web site last week. In two days, the Vatican received approximately 10,000 messages in English at that email address, along with over 6,000 in Spanish, 2,000 in Portuguese, 1,000 in Italian, and several hundred in both German and French. The email messages—almost always brief messages assuring the Pontiff of prayers—form only a part of volume of messages arriving at the Vatican. Letters arriving by mail and fax also number in the thousands.

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# Pope will not preside at Holy Week, Easter services

## March 08, 2005

Pope John Paul II will not preside at any of the major liturgical celebrations of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum, although he does intend to deliver the traditional *Urbi et Orbi* blessing on Easter Sunday.

The Vatican released a full calendar of liturgical events for Holy Week on March 8. Although earlier schedules had called for the Holy Father to preside at major ceremonies, the Pope's hospitalization and surgery have forced a thorough change in plans, with other prelates substituting for the Pontiff.

As Holy Week begins on March 20, with Palm Sunday services in St. Peter's Square, Cardinal Camillo Ruini will preside at the ceremony, which will include the blessing and distribution of palms and a procession. For the past 20 years, Palm Sunday has also been celebrated in Rome as World Youth Day; this will be the first time during that period that Pope John Paul has not been present for those services at the Vatican.

On Holy Thursday, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, will be the principal celebrant at the Chrism Mass, at which the holy oils are blessed for liturgical use during the coming year. That evening, Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, will preside at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, with the traditional washing of the feet of 12 priests. At the conclusion of that service, the Eucharist will be removed to the chapel of repose.

On Good Friday, March 25, Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, the apostolic penitentiary, will preside at the commemoration of the Passion, with a service including a Liturgy of the Word, veneration of the Cross, and Communion. That evening, the Stations of the Cross will be held at the Roman Coliseum, using meditations prepared by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The Vatican announcement did not indicate who would lead that service.

Cardinal Ratzinger, as dean of the College of Cardinals, will preside at the Easter Vigil Mass in the Vatican basilica. And on Easter Sunday morning, Cardinal Angelo Sodano will be the principal celebrant of the Mass in St. Peter's.

After that Mass on Easter morning, Pope John Paul will deliver his *Urbi et Orbi*

blessing and message at midday. The Vatican announcement did not indicate whether the Pope—who has been advised by doctors to spare his voice—would attempt to say the blessing aloud, or have a message read on his behalf.

Vatican officials expect Pope John Paul to return to the Vatican in time for Holy Week, but his gradual recovery after surgery is expected to limit his public activities. This will be the first time during his 26 year pontificate that the Pope has not presided at the Easter Triduum.

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# Pope makes surprise window appearance

## March 09, 2005

Pope John Paul II made a surprise appearance at the window of his hospital room at midday on March 9.

Although the regular Wednesday public audience had been canceled, and no papal appearance was expected, the Holy Father gave his blessing to the crowd on the street.

The Pope came to the window after having concelebrated Mass in his hospital room with other prelates. He was still wearing a purple stole, the liturgical color of Lent, as he greeted the public.

A substantial crowd had gathered before noon on the street outside Gemelli Hospital, including a delegation of rabbis who had come to pray for the Pontiff, a group of newlyweds, a large contingent of pilgrims from Poland, and schoolchildren from the Legnano region near Milan. After giving his blessing to the ensemble, the Pope waved to the different groups within the crowd.

After meeting with the Pope earlier in the morning, Joaquin Navarro-Valls had told reporters that he did not anticipate a papal appearance today. But just before noon, the curtains on the windows of the Pope's suite, on the 10th floor of the hospital, were slowly pulled back, and the crowd could see the Pontiff himself pushing a last curtain out of his way so that he could look down at the street. Evidently the Pope himself had decided, on an impulse, to make this public gesture.

Last Wednesday, February 24, the Pope had not made any appearance at the usual time of the weekly public audience, despite the fact that a large crowd had gathered near the hospital in anticipation. John Paul II has not been able to hold a normal weekly audience since January 26, when he met with pilgrims in the Paul VI auditorium at the Vatican. On the eve of the next scheduled audience he was hospitalized. On February 10, the public audience was replaced by Ash Wednesday ceremonies (which the Pope, newly returned from his first hospital stay of the month, could not attend). On February 23, with his health temporarily stable, the Pope participated in a general audience by a video-conference, sitting in the library of the apostolic palace. Since his return to the hospital on February 24, he had only appeared twice at the window of his room, at the



time of the Angelus audiences on February 27 and March 6.

Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, has announced that the Pope is hoping to return to the Vatican by March 20. But his gradual recovery will not allow him to participate in the liturgical ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter; his only scheduled public appearance is for the Urbi et Orbi blessing on Easter Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, from his hospital room, the Pontiff continues to increase his work schedule. On Wednesday he met for nearly two hours with the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano. He also met with the visiting Archbishop Thaddeus Kondrusiewicz of Moscow, who told reporters that the Pontiff seemed to be “in good form” during their conversation.

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# Pope to leave hospital in “a few more days”

## March 10, 2005

Pope John Paul II will remain in Gemelli Hospital for “a few more days,” but should return to the Vatican in time for Holy Week, reported Joaquin Navarro-Valls on March 10.

In the latest bulletin on the Holy Father’s health, the Vatican spokesman said that the Pontiff is remaining in the hospital on his doctors’ advice, “in order to complete his convalescence, which is progressing regularly.” Emphasizing that the Pope’s recovery has been smooth, the director of the Vatican press office told reporters that they should not expect another medical update until Monday, March 14.

Navarro-Valls said that questions about the Pope’s possible participation in the liturgical celebrations of the Easter season would be addressed after John Paul II returns to the apostolic palace. He added that the Pope is remaining in the hospital now as a precaution, since there is no longer any medical treatment that requires him to stay there. Although John Paul still needs some medical care, he said, “all that can be done at the Vatican.”

In response to reporters’ questions, the Vatican spokesman said that the plan for the Angelus audience on Sunday, March 13, will match the model for the previous two Sundays. For those two weeks, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri led the Angelus and read a message from the Holy Father; at the conclusion of the audience, the Pope appeared at the window of his hospital room to bless the crowd there, with his image televised onto giant screens in St. Peter’s Square.

The Pope is stepping up the pace of his work at the hospital, Navarro-Valls continued. He is holding regular meeting with top Vatican aides, and sending messages, signed from the Gemelli Hospital.

Meanwhile Rome’s Mayor Walter Veltroni told the Italian television network Telepace that he had plans to organize a fireworks display to celebrate the Pope’s release from the hospital. Veltroni said that, after speaking with the Pope’s private secretary, Archbishop Stanislas Dziwisz, he was inclined to postpone the fireworks until May 18, the Pope’s 85th birthday. “The Pope will see how big a candle Rome is going to light for

him!” he said.

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# Polish visitor finds Pope speaking clearly

## March 10, 2005

Pope John Paul II is speaking in an audible voice, reports the Polish publisher of the Pontiff's latest book.

Henryk Wozniakowski, the head of the Zvak publishing house, visited John Paul II in his hospital room on March 9, to present him with a Polish-language edition of *Memory and Identity*. The publisher said that the Pope was able to converse with him, showing that he has recovered some ability to speak after his tracheotomy on February 24. Shortly after the surgery, some Italian medical experts had predicted that it might be several weeks before the Pope would be able to speak.

Wozniakowski was present on March 9 when the Pope concelebrated Mass in his hospital room, together with his priest-secretary, Archbishop Stanislas Dziwisz. He described that as "a very moving experience."

The Zvak publisher said that upon seeing the Holy Father for the first time in 3 months, he was struck immediately by the fact that the Pontiff had lost weight. "That is no doubt due to the fact that he had trouble eating normally," he said. On the other hand, the visitor reported, "I was very much reassured that he could speak."

The Pope's voice was reasonably clear, if not strong, Wozniakowski said. "It may not be a voice that would allow a long discourse, but it's a voice that allows him to speak, to communicate," he said. He added that he had done most of the talking during his short conversation with the Pontiff, to spare the Pope from using his voice too much. But he said that the Pope had expressed his satisfaction upon seeing the book, and offered his best wishes to the Polish publisher and his family.

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# Pope's voice aired on Vatican telecast

## March 11, 2005

The Vatican Television Center has broadcast footage of Pope John Paul II concelebrating Mass in his hospital room, and meeting with visiting bishops from Tanzania. The March 11 broadcasts gave the public the first opportunity to hear the Pope's voice since he underwent a tracheotomy on February 24.

The Holy Father concelebrated Mass with his priest-secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, as he has done each day recently. The Vatican broadcast showed the Pope giving the final blessing, speaking in Latin in a husky but understandable voice.

The broadcast also showed the Pope meeting with Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar es Salaam and Bishop Severine Niwemugizi of Rulenge, the president of the Tanzanian bishops' conference. On the audio portion of the broadcast, the Pope responded briefly, in Italian, to the greetings of the visiting African prelates.

Since March 1, when Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger reported that the Pope was speaking once again, a steady stream of witnesses have testified that John Paul is regaining his ability to talk normally. These reports have contradicted the predictions of some doctors who said that the Pontiff might not recover his speaking ability for several weeks after the operation.

Since the February 24 operation, in which a tube was inserted into his throat to help him breathe, the Pope has been doing regular exercises to strengthen his breathing ability and recover his voice, the Vatican has reported. The March 11 broadcast was the first public evidence of his vocal recovery.

The Vatican has announced that the Sunday Angelus audience on March 13 will follow the same pattern as that of last week—with Archbishop Leonardo Sandri reading a message from the Pope, and John Paul II giving his blessing from the window of his room in Gemelli Hospital. The Vatican television broadcast on Friday excited speculation that this week, the Pope's voice might be heard as he gives the blessing.

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# Returning Home: March 12-24

# Pope returns to Vatican

## March 14, 2005

Pope John Paul II passed two milestones in his convalescence on March 13. He spoke in public, for the first time since his tracheotomy, at the Angelus audience; later in the day he left the Gemelli Hospital to return to his apartment at the Vatican.

After silently giving his blessing to the crowd outside the hospital at midday, the Pope said, “Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for your visit.” His voice was hoarse and rasping, but clearly recognizable. And those few words were the first he had uttered in public since his surgery on February 24. (The Pope’s voice had been heard briefly during a March 11 Vatican television broadcast, as he spoke with visiting bishops from Tanzania.)

The Holy Father remained in his hospital room during the Angelus audience, leaving Archbishop Leonardo Sandri to lead the crowd in St. Peter’s Square in prayer. But his image was clearly visible on giant screens set up there, and his voice was heard by the large crowd that gathered in spite of traffic tie-ups caused by a marathon being held in Rome the same day.

Early on Sunday evening, the Pope left the hospital, traveling across Rome in a grey Mercedes with tinted windows, through cheering crowds. Bells began to sound at the Vatican at 6:30, and the arrival of the Pope’s official photographer, Arturo Mari, in St. Peter’s Square alerted the crowds to the Pope’s impending arrival. The lights in the windows of the papal apartments on the 3rd floor of the apostolic palace soon announced the Pontiff’s return.

The Vatican press office had disclosed earlier in the day that the Pope would be leaving the hospital. So there were substantial crowds near the hospital, and around the Vatican, to watch and cheer as he passed by.

On his previous return from the hospital, on February 10, the Pope had made a very visible public appearance in his “popemobile,” with the dome illuminated so that he was visible to the public. On this occasion he traveled more discreetly, sitting beside the driver, waving to the bystanders as he passed. The Pope’s movements were slow and obviously labored—as they had been during his short appearance at the window of his hospital room—but he appeared delighted to be returning to the Vatican.

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# Italian doctors speculate on Pope's prognosis

## March 14, 2005

Although Pope John Paul II has returned to the Vatican after 18 days in Gemelli Hospital, some doctors interviewed by the Italian media believe that he should have spent more time convalescing in the hospital.

Speaking to *Corriere della Sera*, Professor Giancarlo Cianfrone, a specialist in speech difficulties at the Sapienza University in Rome, observed that the Pope would still be closely watched by the doctors who had treated him. Nevertheless, Cianfrone said, despite the careful attention the Pope will receive in his apartment at the apostolic palace, "it isn't a hospital." If the Pope has another severe respiratory crisis, he will have no choice but to return to Gemelli, Cianfrone observed, adding that he would have preferred to see the Pontiff spend "one or two weeks" more in the hospital. Papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters last week that upon his release from the hospital, the Pope would not need any particular medical treatment, aside from the care that Vatican aides can provide. Professor Cianfrone said that the rough, low voice that the Pope displayed during his first public speaking appearance on Sunday, March 13, is due primarily to the effects of the tube that was inserted in his throat to help him breathe. Part of that effect will be relieved when the tube is removed, he said. On the other hand, the low voice is also caused by the Pope's continued difficulty in breathing, the doctor said; the Holy Father cannot push enough air through his vocal cords to make a normal sound.

Cianfrone's medical analysis matched the observation of Cardinal Polycarpo Pengo. The Tanzanian prelate, after speaking briefly with the Pontiff, observed that John Paul II "spoke with a great deal of effort, and his voice was quite weak."

Navarro-Valls has said that the Pope's doctors will decide when it is prudent to remove the tube from his throat. No announcement has been made about when that decision could be made.

Professor Corrado Manni, an anesthesiologist who has treated the Pope in the past, told *La Repubblica* that John Paul II should rest his voice as much as possible. He observed that the Pontiff's return to the Vatican demonstrates that "he is capable of

resuming his functions as head and guide of the Church.” Still, he warned against straining his voice, which could compromise his recovery.

“Even if the speaking engagements can be kept to the minimum, it is always tiring” to make public appearances, Manni said. He advised limiting the Pope’s schedule, but conceded that John Paul II is very likely to push himself back toward a regular schedule. Earlier Manni had told *La Stampa* , “it is difficult to try to sway the Pope when he has already made his decision.”

Vaticah-watchers continue to speculate about the possibility that John Paul II will somehow try to preside at the Way of the Cross in the Roman Coliseum on Good Friday, in spite of his illness. Manni observed only, “it is good to be prudent.” However, the Italian doctor added that “we know that the Pontiff is always ready, and that he is prepared to devote himself to his ministry, to his last resources.”

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# Pope thanks media for hospital coverage

## March 14, 2005

In his message to a Sunday public audience on March 13, Pope John Paul II thanked media reporters for keeping the public informed about his condition during his stay in Gemelli Hospital.

The Pope's message, which was read to the crowd in St. Peter's Square by Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, also thanked the media for maintaining a respectful distance, allowing medical personnel to do their work at the hospital without interruption. And once again the Holy Father mentioned his gratitude for the countless prayers offered on his behalf.

"The role of the mass media is very important in our age of global communication," the Pope observed. He paid tribute to those who furnish the public with punctual and accurate information, acknowledging that their work is "not without sacrifice." The Pope also gave his encouragement to those who use the media for evangelization, saying that it is "possible to nourish the spirit as well, through radio, television, and the internet."

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# No papal audience Wednesday

## March 15, 2005

Pope John Paul II will not hold his regular weekly audience on Wednesday, March 16, but may greet the public from the window of his apartment in the apostolic palace.

The Holy Father, who is still recovering from surgery on February 24, has been instructed by doctors to limit his activities and particularly to save his voice. Staff aides of the pontifical household said that the regular Wednesday audience would “definitely not” be held, but said that the Pope might come to the window at noon to salute the crowd. “That would be up to him,” they said.

The staff added that the Pope would not attempt to address an audience by video appearance, as he did on February 23, shortly before his second trip of that month to Gemelli Hospital.

Vatican employees are installing thousands of chairs in St. Peter’s Square, in preparation for the liturgical ceremonies of Holy Week, when thousands of pilgrims will converge on Rome. If a large crowd gathers in the Square on Wednesday, Vatican-watchers suspect that the Pope will be more likely to make a brief appearance, to give his blessing and perhaps even say a few words.

At his last such appearance, when he came to the window of his room in Gemelli Hospital at the conclusion of the Angelus audience on Sunday, March 13, the Pontiff spoke in public for the first time since undergoing surgery. Earlier, on March 9, John Paul II had made a short, unscheduled appearance, without speaking, to bless the crowd gathered outside the hospital at midday, the time of his regular Wednesday audience.

The last weekly public audience held by the Pope under ordinary conditions was on January 26.

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# Silent Pope greets audience

## March 16, 2005

Pope John Paul II made a brief appearance at his window on March 16, at the time of the usual weekly public audience, but he did not speak.

The Holy Father appeared at the window of his apartment in the apostolic palace shortly before noon, and gave his blessing to the crowd in St. Peter's Square. The Pope remained at the window for just one minute, tracing the Sign of the Cross with his hand several times.

As soon as John Paul II made his appearance, his image was also displayed on two giant screens, thanks to the video cameras that are now permanently mounted on the colonnade of St. Peter's Square.

During his last public appearance, at the time of the Angelus audience on March 13, the Pontiff had said a few words of greeting to the crowd outside Gemelli Hospital, where he was still confined at the time. Those were the Pope's first public words since his tracheotomy on February 24. But doctors have cautioned that the Holy Father should not use his voice frequently, in order to give his larynx time to heal.

The tube in the Pope's throat, which helps him to breathe, also carries a greater risk of new infections—another reason why doctors have instructed him to minimize his public appearances and rest during his convalescence. Corrado Manni, an anesthesiologist who has treated John Paul in the past, told the Italian daily *La Repubblica* that the Pontiff should not only avoid speaking, but also minimize the meetings that might tire him, including sessions with visiting prelates and dignitaries.

Since the Pope's return to the Vatican on March 13, no indication has been given as to his involvement in liturgical ceremonies for Holy Week and Easter, aside from the announcement that he would deliver his *Urbi et Orbi* message on Easter Sunday. Some speculation continues on the possibility that he might participate in the Way of the Cross on Good Friday; the Vatican has not yet announced who will preside at that service.

The Pope's next scheduled public appearance will be on Palm Sunday, March 20, when several hundred young people are expected to observe World Youth Day at the Vatican. Although he will not participate directly in the celebration—which will be led by Cardinal Camillo Ruini—John Paul II is expected to greet the young people from his

apartment window.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35892>

# 40,000 email messages for hospitalized Pontiff

## March 16, 2005

Nearly 40,000 email messages were sent to Pope John Paul II during his 18-day stay in the Gemelli Hospital, Vatican officials have disclosed.

When the Holy Father was hospitalized for the second time in February, the [Vatican web site](#) gave an email address [jean\_paul\_ii@vatican.va] for visitors who wanted to send a message to the Pope, offering him sympathy, encouragement, and prayers. As of March 15, the Vatican internet office reported having received 39,550 messages.

The messages were written in the 6 languages served on the Vatican site: German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese. The largest number of messages, about 18,000, were in English. The next most popular language was Spanish (13,850), following by Italian (2,600), Portuguese (2,500), French (1,400), and German (1,200). Fernando Vergez Alzaga, the head of the Vatican internet office, says that actually some of these messages were written in other languages. The English- and Italian-language sites, in particular, received a number of messages in Polish, he said.

Because of the overwhelming response, the Spanish priest said, the Vatican will not be able to send individual responses to all of the people who wrote. But a general expression of thanks is being posted on the Vatican site. The email messages, along with the heightened interest in the Pope's condition during his health crisis, pushed the Vatican web site to the limits of its technical capacity. Normally the site receives about 2 million "hits" a day; during the last days of February, that figure was up to 9 million. The Vatican internet site, which came online at Easter 1997, relies on three servers, named for the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. The site is served by 18 people, including an international team to translate documents and statements into the 6 languages that are used.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35893>

# Surprise video appearance by Pope at youth conference

## March 18, 2005

Pope John Paul II made a surprise appearance, by video link, to a meeting of young people in Rome on March 17.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini led a Thursday-evening gathering of young Romans preparing for the celebration of World Youth Day, held in the basilica of St. John Lateran. The cardinal read a message from the Pope, thanking the young people for their prayers. Then, in an unexpected addition to the program, the Holy Father himself appeared on a video screen set up in the basilica. The Pope did not speak, but silently blessed the gathering.

The papal appearance electrified the young audience. John Paul II appeared very tired; he trembled noticeably, and the video connection was cut several times, apparently so that the Pontiff could take a few moments to collect himself. Nevertheless, the young Roman crowd shouted encouragement and applause. In his message to the young people, the Pope said that he hoped the World Youth Day celebration, to be held in Cologne in August, would help them to take the lead in building “a civilization of love.” He urged them to center their lives around the Eucharist, and to be open to “generous vocations to holiness—which is the primary measure of ordinary Christian life, particularly in families.” The Pope’s appearance was his first videoconference since his return to the Vatican after surgery on February 24. He had previously held one public audience by the same method, just before his second February stay in Gemelli Hospital.

The Pope’s participation kept alive the speculation among Vatican-watchers that John Paul II will attempt to take part in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday—perhaps presiding by videoconference at the event, which is held in the Roman Coliseum. The Vatican still has not announced who will lead that ceremony.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35947>



# Pope in pain during quick public appearance

## March 21, 2005

Pope John Paul II seemed clearly to be in severe pain during a brief, silent public appearance on Sunday, March 21.

The Holy Father came to the window of his apartment in the apostolic palace shortly at noon, at the time of the Angelus audience, to greet the faithful who had gathered in St. Peter's Square after Mass on Palm Sunday. Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Pope's vicar for the Rome diocese, was the principal celebrant of the Mass.

Shortly after 12:30 the Pope made his appearance, waving to the crowd and giving his blessing, flourishing a palm branch. His appearance, at the third-floor window, drew loud applause and some tears from the crowd; many people had waited two hours or more to see him.

The Pope's face betrayed his suffering, and at one point during his 2-minute appearance he put his hand to his face in a gesture of fatigue or pain. His secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, quickly appeared behind him, evidently ready to help him back into his room. But in what seemed to be a signal of determination, the Pope rapped his hand on the window sill and remained in place for a few more moments.

The obvious fatigue and suffering of the Pope presage a difficult Holy Week for John Paul II, who has been severely limited in his movements and his ability to speak. The Holy Father is not scheduled to take a direct part in any of the major liturgical celebrations of the week—although some speculation remains that he may attempt a video appearance at the Way of the Cross on Good Friday.

Prior to the Pope's appearance, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri told the crowd that the Pontiff had followed the Mass by television. Cardinal Ruini led the audience in the Angelus, and Archbishop Sandri read a message in which the Pope encouraged the young people preparing for World Youth Day in Cologne. This was the first time that the Pope had not directly participated in the World Youth Day observances that coincide with Palm Sunday. And observers noted that in his message, he did not explicitly promise to meet with the young people in Cologne—a promise that he has regularly included in his past messages to groups preparing for the August celebration.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=35983>

# New crisis in Pope's health?

## March 22, 2005

The director of the Vatican press office abruptly withdrew from a news conference on Tuesday, March 22, amid rumors of a new crisis in the health of Pope John Paul II.

The Vatican has made no recent announcement about the Pope's health, aside from formal notice that the Holy Father would not hold his regular weekly public audience on Wednesday. That notice, made by Father Ciro Benedettini, the deputy director of the press office, had been expected.

However, reporters were put on alert by the last-minute announcement that Joaquin Navarro-Valls would not attend a press conference, where he was scheduled to discuss a new film about John Paul II that is scheduled to air on Italian television on Easter Sunday.

Navarro-Valls gave no reason for his sudden withdrawal. But one of the organizers of the news conference, asked to explain, replied: "You know very well why."

Speculation about the Holy Father's physical condition has heightened since his brief public appearance on Palm Sunday, when the Pope seemed to be in acute pain. During a 2-minute appearance at the window of his apartment in the apostolic palace, the Pope put his hand to his head in a sign of distress—a gesture that he had made several times during a video appearance at a youth meeting on March 17. During that earlier meeting, the video feed of the Pope's image was disrupted several times, evidently while aides sought to ease the Pope's discomfort. The Polish Archbishop Henryk Hosser, secretary of the Congregation for Evangelization, told the Roman news agency I Media that John Paul II is suffering "in sympathy with the Passion of Christ." He added: "It is difficult to say what the immediate future will bring, but this situation gives a special atmosphere to this Holy Week."

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# Pope makes surprise, silent appearance

## March 23, 2005

Pope John Paul II made a brief, silent appearance at the window of his apartment on March 23, at the time of the regular Wednesday audience. His face marked by pain, the Holy Father gave his blessing to the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The Pope's appearance was unexpected, since the Vatican had announced that the regular Wednesday audience would not be held this week. But in what has now become a regular weekly ritual, a crowd gathered late in the morning in the Vatican square, at the time ordinarily set for the audience, hoping for a glimpse of the Pontiff.

At about 10:30, the giant video screens in St. Peter's Square carried a message that the Pope would make an appearance at around 11, to bless the faithful. When the Pope did appear—about 15 minutes after the hour—his image was immediately picked up by Vatican television cameras on the colonnades of St. Peter's Square, and relayed to the video screens. Photographers were clustered around the obelisk in the middle of the square, ready to snap the Pope's picture.

Shortly before 11, aides opened the windows of the papal apartment, and hung out a tapestry with the papal coat of arms. But as the minutes passed, and the Pope did not appear, the crowd became nervous—well aware of the rumors that the Pope's health has been slipping. His eventual appearance prompted a roar of relief and applause.

The Pope smiled as he blessed the crowd, and appeared more relaxed than during his previous public appearance on Palm Sunday. But he was clearly in pain, and remained at the window for only a minute before returning to the privacy of his quarters.

Vatican officials have sought to curtail speculation about the Pope's health. Papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters on March 22 that there was no cause for immediate alarm. And Dr. Rodolfo Proeitti, a member of the medical team that has been treating the Pontiff, said that he did not expect another hospitalization—thus denying rumors that had gained currency in Rome. The Pope's next officially scheduled public appearance will be on Easter Sunday, when he delivers his *Urbi et Orbi* message. But there are persistent rumors that he will preside, by videoconference, at the Way of the Cross in the Roman Coliseum on Good Friday. The Vatican still has not announced who

will preside at that ceremony—a silence that has encouraged suspicions that the Pope will attempt to participate in the event.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36031>

# Pope's health problems not hampering Church governance, cardinal says

March 23, 2005

Cardinal Camillo Ruini has dismissed suggestions that the declining health of Pope John Paul II creates problems for Church governance.

“His physical condition may be fragile, but his mental condition is absolutely sound,” said the Pope’s vicar for the Rome diocese. Cardinal Ruini—who is also the president of the Italian bishops’ conference—told the Italian Catholic weekly *Famiglia Cristiana* that the Holy Father “continues to carry out acts of government, to make the big decisions, as he always has.”

Cardinal Ruini said that the Pope’s two trips to the Gemelli Hospital during the month of February helped to send an important message to the world. By accepting his suffering, he said, John Paul II has set an example for all Christians, and particularly for priests. He noted that in his annual letter to the world’s priests, the Pontiff reminded them that “celebrating the Eucharist in the person of Christ means offering oneself, too.”

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36039>

## Vatican prelate praises Pope's “serene abandonment”

March 24, 2005

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, presided at the annual Chrism Mass in Rome on Holy Thursday, replacing the ailing Pope John Paul II.

At the start of the ceremony, Cardinal Re read a message from the Pontiff, in which the Holy Father said that he would be following the ceremony by closed-circuit television in his apartment, and joining the priests of Rome in prayer. “With you I give thanks to God for the gift and mystery of our priesthood,” he said.

The Chrism Mass, at which the bishop of each diocese blesses the holy oils for sacramental use during the year, is annual celebration of the priesthood and the communion of priests with their bishops. The Pope urged the Roman clerics to renew the vows they had made “with generous enthusiasm” on the day of their ordination.

During his own homily, Cardinal Re thanked the Pope for his witness, praising his “serene abandonment to God.” Although he was not physically present, the cardinal observed that the Holy Father was “more present than ever” in spirit with his priests.

The Chrism Mass is the last liturgical ceremony before the Easter Triduum, which begins on Holy Thursday evening with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, will preside at that ceremony in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The Vatican still has not announced who will preside at the Way of the Cross on Good Friday in the Roman Coliseum. The absence of any announcement has encouraged speculation that Pope John Paul II hopes to participate—almost certainly by a televised appearance.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36059>

# A Part in the Passion: March 25- April 1



# Pope's illness seen "directly related" to Paschal mystery

March 25, 2005

The illness of Pope John Paul II is "directly related" to the Paschal mystery, according to the American cardinal who will lead the commemoration of Christ's Passion in St. Peter's Basilica on Good Friday.

Cardinal James Francis Stafford also observed that the sight of a "stooped Pope" is an invitation to the faithful to think about their own mortality, and to "respect life right until its natural end."

The witness offered to the world by John Paul II is "more profound today" than when he was young and healthy, Cardinal Stafford observed. Through his own obvious pain, the Holy Father today bears witness to "the true heart of the Paschal mystery, which is suffering," he said. At the same time, John Paul II shows the world how to endure pain, uniting his own pains to the sufferings of Christ.

During Holy Week, the cardinal continued, the Church meditates on the passage of earthly life, on suffering and death, and on the price of sin—all seen in a new light on Easter Sunday. "The Pope is experiencing the Pasch of suffering," he said. "He is helping us to focus very intensively on the significance of that suffering in the Eucharistic Body of Christ." Moreover, he said, the Pope's open suffering shows his acceptance of God's will.

The Pope's witness is especially beneficial to the Church today, Cardinal Stafford said, because "I think that in this contemporary culture, there is a lack of will to face death and especially a lack of will to help others who are dying."

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36068>

# Frail Pope is still fully lucid and in charge

## March 25, 2005

Pope John Paul II retains his full mental capacity, despite his physical frailty, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has assured an Italian television audience.

On a Good Friday broadcast by the RAI network, entitled “The Calvary of John Paul II,” the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said that the Holy Father is acting with “absolute lucidity.” The broadcast aired just before the traditional observance of the Way of the Cross in the Roman Coliseum.

Cardinal Ratzinger—who prepared the meditations to be used during this year’s Way of the Cross—also remarked that from a Christian perspective, it is “a gift from God to be given physical sufferings” such as those that the Pope now endures. In spite of that suffering, the German cardinal said, the Pope has retained “the capacity to make the essential choices and to govern” the Church. He conceded that the Pope is now considerably less active as an administrator, but insisted that John Paul II still makes “the essential decisions.” During the Pope’s hospitalization, he added, the question of Church governance never really arose, since John Paul remained clearly in charge.

The Way of the Cross was led by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Pope’s vicar for the Rome diocese. The Vatican had delayed an announcement on who would lead this ceremony, raising considerable speculation that the Pope would attempt to participate. But the Pontiff’s frail health, which has been evident in his recent public appearances, has made it impossible to join in the public liturgical ceremonies of Holy Week. He did make an appearance by video link during the Vatican commemoration of the Passion; his image was shown on a giant screen there as he sat in his apartment.

On the same RAI broadcast, Cardinal Angelo Scola, the Patriarch of Venice, remarked that it was “certainly a great mortification” for the Pope that he could not be present “in a direct physical way” during the Holy Week observances. But Cardinal Scola observed that “in a certain sense, he will be present in an even more powerful way.”

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# Silent and suffering, Pope offers Easter blessing

## March 28, 2005

Pope John Paul II was unable to speak, and in obvious pain, as he appeared in public on Easter Sunday to deliver his Urbi et Orbi blessing.

The Holy Father gave his blessing to the faithful in St. Peter's Square, and remained at the window of his apartment for about 12 minutes. But after initially struggling to speak, he gave up and remained silent. For the first time in his 26-year pontificate, he was unable to deliver his Easter message orally; in previous years he had given the short message in as many as 60 different languages.

Earlier, the Pope had followed the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, the climactic service of the Easter Triduum, by a video link, from his apartment in the apostolic palace. Although the Pope sent a written message to the congregation, he did not make an appearance on the giant video screens installed around St. Peter's Square, as he had done for the commemoration of Christ's Passion on Good Friday.

On Easter Sunday, many of the faithful in St. Peter's Square wept openly as they saw the Holy Father, who trembled visibly during his appearance, and put his hand to his head several times in a gesture that clearly showed his suffering. Aides had brought a microphone when he first appeared, but after struggling and producing only a few unrecognizable noises, he resigned himself to the fact that he could not speak.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, was also clearly moved by strong emotions as he read the Pope's short Easter message. Cardinal Sodano added that the Pope was "closer to us than ever and blesses us with all his heart."

In his Easter message, read by the Italian prelate, John Paul II offered his prayers for peace in the Middle East and in Africa, and for the peoples suffering from famine and natural disasters. He pleaded for hope for those in need, and added a caution "that material progress never erodes the spiritual principles that are the heart of civilization."

The Pope's Urbi et Orbi message was broadcast by more than 100 television networks, covering 74 nations on five continents. Viewers say St. Peter's Square richly decorated with tulips, azaleas, and rhododendrons in a profusion of colors—but dominated by the yellow-and-white of the papacy—donated by Dutch nurseries.

At the Easter Vigil service, held in the Vatican basilica, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger presided, as 24 cardinals concelebrated the Mass. The dean of the College of Cardinals, in his homily, urged Christians to defend their faith against the inroads made by secular ideology. Cardinal Ratzinger noted that "to follow Christ implies being obedient to his commandments." Catholics, he said, should "have confidence in the Church, in her interpretation and articulation of the divine Word." He added that Christian faith "is not content with vague utopian ideas, but on the contrary gives concrete guidance" about human behavior as well as the ultimate goal of human life.

During the Vigil ceremony, the German cardinal baptized five people: two Japanese women, one Peruvian and one Italian woman, and a man for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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# No papal appearance on Easter Monday

## March 28, 2005

Pope John Paul II did not make an appearance at the window of his apartment at noon on Easter Monday, although more than 1,000 people had gathered in St. Peter's Square hoping to see him.

The Vatican had not officially confirmed or denied that the Holy Father would make a public appearance at midday on March 28. But in previous years he had never failed to lead the faithful in the Regina Caeli: the Marian prayer that replaces the Angelus during the Easter season.

Pope John Paul had appeared on Easter Sunday, remaining at his window for about 12 minutes, blessing the crowd below, but failing in his efforts to speak. The Holy Father was obviously in pain during that public appearance.

A substantial group of Polish pilgrims, along with a youth group from Flanders and a large number of Italian families, waited in St. Peter's Square, watching the windows of the papal apartment on the third floor of the apostolic palace. The Polish contingent in particular led the crowd in songs, prayers, and bursts of applause, hoping to entice the Pontiff to his window.

Since his release from Gemelli Hospital, the Pope has made several very short, unannounced public appearances. But on Monday, the windows of his apartment remained closed.

Earlier in the morning, the Vatican television center had informed media outlets that there would be no broadcast of the traditional Regina Caeli prayer. Nevertheless, shortly before noon, one of the television cameras that are now permanently installed in St. Peter's Square turned toward the apostolic palace, causing a stir of excitement in the crowd. Later, Vatican television officials that they were preparing in case of a surprise appearance by the Pope.

The people in St. Peter's Square waited for about an hour after noon, then gradually dispersed.

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# Heavy speculation on Pope's health

## March 29, 2005

During the quiet days after Easter, there has been intense speculation in the Italian press about the health of Pope John Paul II, while the Vatican remains silent.

Since March 10—three days after the Holy Father ended his latest stay at Gemelli Hospital—the Vatican has not released any official bulletin about the Pope's health. But the Italian media have carried dozens of stories about his illness, and scores of photos showing Pope John Paul, during recent public appearances, putting his hand to his head in an evident gesture of pain.

The most recent rumors circulating around Rome suggest that the Pope will be hospitalized again in the near future. The daily *Corriere della Sera* reported, in its March 29 edition, that the prospect of a third hospitalization was becoming more and more imminent. The newspaper went so far as to say that the Pope would probably return to Gemelli Hospital next week. *Corriere della Sera* said that Vatican officials would not deny that possibility.

While Vatican officials are not speaking for the record, the Pope's personal physician gave a very different perspective. "We are reasonably comfortable with the post-operative phase," said Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, speaking to *La Repubblica*. But *Il Messaggero* reported that the Pope is suffering, and added its own report that a new trip to the hospital is looming. On the other hand, *Il Messaggero* cited Vatican aides close to the Pope as saying that despite his vain efforts to speak aloud during his Easter Sunday public audience, John Paul II is now speaking quietly. And *La Stampa* suggested that the exertions of Holy Week and Easter might explain why the Pontiff was unable to speak on Sunday.

With the beginning of April just a few days away, the Vatican press office has not released any information about the Pope's schedule for the coming month, nor has the Vatican's liturgical office provided the customary list of ceremonies at which the Pope will preside. There have been no announcements about two public events scheduled well in advance: a beatification ceremony on April 24 and a formal visit to Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, set for April 29.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, in his capacity as Secretary of State, continues to receive



foreign dignitaries who visit the Vatican, taking the Pope's place in that largely ceremonial role. But it is not clear with the bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo, who begin their *ad limina* visits next week, will have an opportunity to meet privately with the Pontiff. Pope John Paul II did receive a few members of the Tanzanian bishops' conference during their *ad limina* visit in March.

The Pope's weekly public audiences, regularly held on Wednesdays, remain suspended. The last regular audience was on February 23, when John Paul II addressed the crowd by video-conference, seated in the apostolic palace. The Sunday audiences, at which pilgrims gather to pray the *Regina Caeli*, will continue, but Archbishop Leonardo Sandri will lead the prayers, as he has done since the Pope's hospitalization. It appears likely that John Paul II will appear at the window of his apartment during these audiences when he is able to do so; such appearances are arranged and announced at the last minute.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36152>

# Pope gets feeding tube

## March 30, 2005

Doctors have installed a “nasal-gastric” tube to provide Pope John Paul II with nourishment, the Vatican has disclosed.

Ending a long silence about the Pontiff’s health—which had given rise to intense speculation among Italian journalists—the Vatican press office revealed on March 30 that the Holy Father had been equipped with a feeding tube “to improve the caloric intake.” In making the announcement that a feeding tube was already in place, the Vatican defused reports that the Pope would need to be hospitalized once again.

The Vatican bulletin on the Pope’s health was issued shortly after an impromptu public appearance by John Paul II at midday. Although his regular Wednesday audiences have been suspended indefinitely, the Holy Father came to the window of his apartment to greet the crowd that had gathered in St. Peter’s Square, hoping for such an appearance. The Pope gave his blessing, and tried to speak, but was only able to produce a guttural rasp.

Pope John Paul was reportedly having difficulty in swallowing, making it difficult for him to obtain proper nourishment. Informed sources at the Vatican say that the Pope is able to eat, but the feeding tube became necessary because he was not able to take in enough food to sustain his recovery after surgery.

Because of the symptoms of Parkinson’s disease, which have stiffened the muscles of his throat and chest, the Pope has had difficulty in breathing, swallowing, and clearing his throat. The insertion of the feeding tube comes after the February operation in which doctors inserted a tube through his throat to ease his breathing. The nasal-gastic tube, a flexible hose running through his nose into his stomach, enables medical personnel to ensure that the Holy Father has proper nutrition.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, said that the Pontiff “continues his slow and progressive convalescence” He reported that the Pope spends “many hours each day” in a chair, and has been meeting with top Vatican officials.

The Vatican statement made a point of saying that the Pope’s care was being provided by Vatican personnel, under the direction of the Pontiff’s personal physician, Dr. Renato Buzzonetti. That statement seemed to be aimed at quelling rumors that the

Pope would be hospitalized once again.

The Vatican bulletin on March 30 was the first formal statement about the Pope's health since March 10. Navarro-Valls himself had not made a public appearance since March 13, when he announced the Pope's return to the Vatican after 18 days in Gemelli Hospital. The silence from the Vatican had prompted Italian journalists to seek out unofficial sources, and during the past few days many papers had reported that the Pope would soon be hospitalized for the insertion of a feeding tube.

The Pope's failure to come to his window on the Monday after Easter had fueled fears about his health. On Wednesday, during his short public appearance, he appeared clearly to be in pain, but remained at the window for about 4 minutes, acknowledging cheers from about 4,000 people in St. Peter's Square.

After the crowd had recited the Lord's Prayer, the Pope gave his blessing. Then an aide, Msgr. Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki, came forward to confer with him, apparently asking whether the Pope wanted to address the crowd. When the Pontiff nodded, a microphone was brought forward, and John Paul II struggled but was unable to speak. Similarly, on Easter Sunday, the Holy Father had made a concerted effort to speak, to deliver at least a part of his *Urbi et Orbi* message aloud, but was unable to do so.

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36175>

# Vatican bracing for papal succession

## April 01, 2005

With the physical health of Pope John Paul II rapidly deteriorating, Church officials are bracing for the dramatic changes that will come at the Vatican with the death of the Pontiff.

Top Vatican officials had gathered around the Holy Father in the morning of April 1. The Pope reportedly met with Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Secretary of State; Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the vicar for the Rome diocese; and Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, the *sostituto* or deputy Secretary of State.

But it would be Cardinal Eduardo Martinez Somalo who would come to the fore with the Pontiff's death. The Spanish prelate, who is prefect of the Congregation for Religious, also holds the office of *camerlengo*: the key figure in the period of transition between Popes. He would certify the death of the Pontiff, in the presence of Msgr. Piero Marini, the master of pontifical ceremonies; and Msgr. Enrico Serafini, the notary for the papal household. The Pope's death would then be announced to the people of Rome—either by the vicar for the Rome diocese, Cardinal Ruini, or by the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Ratzinger. The cardinals of the world would then be summoned to Rome for the funeral of John Paul II and the election of the 265th Roman Pontiff.

With the death of the Pope, all offices of the Roman Curia become vacant, with two exceptions: the *camerlengo* retains his important role, as does the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary (currently Cardinal James Francis Stafford), whose office deals with issues of conscience. All the other officials—the prefects of Congregations and presidents of Pontifical Councils—cease operating in those capacities. The workings of the Vatican essentially cease, until a new Pope makes his own appointments, or confirms the current occupants of various Curial posts.

The *camerlengo* supervises the administration of the Holy See during the transitional period. Among his first duties is the task of securing the papal apartments. The Pope's secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, and the Polish nuns who have handled household tasks for John Paul II will remain in the apostolic palace until the

Pope's funeral; then the papal apartments are closed off. The *camerlengo* is responsible for destroying the Pope's official seal, which is placed on formal papal documents, and the "fisherman's ring" that is the sign of his office as Successor to Peter. The College of Cardinals will set up temporary committees to oversee the necessary work of administering the Holy See, and to arrange the papal conclave. But the cardinals hold no power to govern the Church during the interregnum. In his apostolic constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis* in 1996, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed that no act of Church governance—such as the appointment of a bishop or acceptance of a bishop's resignation, or the publication of any teaching document—is valid until a new Pope is elected. Nor can the cardinals amend or correct the acts of previous Popes—including those that govern the process of a papal election.

When the Pope's death is announced, all cardinals are called to Rome for the funeral. There are currently 183 cardinals, of whom 117 are under the age of 80 and therefore eligible to participate in a papal election. Pope John Paul II has elevated 170 of the living cardinals, and all but 3 of those who will choose his successor.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36224>

# Vatican says Pope's condition "very serious"

April 01, 2005

At 6:30 am, Rome time, Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls made the following statement regarding Pope John Paul's medical condition:

"This morning the Holy Father's health situation is very serious. Yesterday afternoon, March 31, as already announced, following a diagnosed infection of the urinary tract, the Pope suffered septic shock and cardio-circulatory collapse. The Holy Father is being treated in his private apartment by the Vatican's own medical team. The Pope also received all appropriate cardio-respiratory assistance. The pope himself asked to stay in the Vatican and to be treated by his medical team there.

"The Pope is conscious, aware, and tranquil. He received the Sacrament of the Sick at 7:17 last night. At six this morning he concelebrated Mass.

"The Pope's medical staff consists of the personal physician, Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, 2 specialists, a cardiologist, an ear, nose, and throat specialist, and 2 nurses."

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36210>

# Prayers for the Pope come from around the world

## April 01, 2005

Catholics and non-Catholics alike around the world are praying for Pope John Paul's health. Since last night, when news about the Pope's deteriorating condition was flashed around the world, eyes have been fixed on the Vatican and the Pontiff's health.

In the Philippines, where Catholics account for 85 percent of the population, Cardinal Jaime Sin said, "We entrust our Holy Father to the Lord and pray that He may guide us and give us the strength in this difficult moment. Let us continue praying for the Pope."

The prelate also called on Filipino bishops to celebrate special Masses for the Pope's health.

Like hundreds of others, Linda Nicol and her husband Romy stopped at Manila's Church of the Redeemer to pray. Eyes full of tears, she said: "We hope he may still have a long life because the whole world loves him."

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, thousands of Christians have gone to church to pray following satellite TV news reports about the Pope's deteriorating health. Indonesians' love for the Pope stems from his tireless commitment to ending religious conflicts, especially on the Maluku Islands

The faithful are praying in East Timor, where the memory of the Pope's 1989 visit is still very much alive. Then, the small Asian nation was still under Indonesian occupation.

Rosalia da Costa said, "I am distraught at the thought that something might happen to him. He is a very much admired figure who everyone listens to. I won't stop praying for his recovery."

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36226>

# The Pope's long physical decline

## April 01, 2005

At a midday press briefing on April 1, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, essentially confirmed that Pope John Paul II is facing his final struggle after a long series of health problems.

Despite persistent speculation about his possible retirement, which flourished for the last several years of his long 26-year pontificate, John Paul II will have completed his own goal, persevering as leader of the Church until his death.

In the fall of 2003, when the Holy Father went through a severe health crisis, the talk of papal retirement reached a crescendo. But on that occasion—as on many others—John Paul II showed his resilience, recovering his health and resuming his regular work.

Since 2002, the Pope has been restricted in his physical movements, using a rolling chair (not a wheelchair, but an armchair secured on a platform equipped with wheels) to move around the Vatican. But until February of this year he continued to hold his regular public audiences.

It was in February 2002 that the Pope's physical ailments first began to require significant changes in his schedule. After the annual Lenten Retreat at the Vatican that year, the press office announced that John Paul II would discontinue his practice of visiting parishes in the Rome diocese. At the time, that change was attributed to “arthritic” problems. The Vatican was not ready to admit that the Holy Father suffered from Parkinson's disease. In fact, although that ailment is now universally recognized, it has never been formally acknowledged by the Vatican.

Also in 2002, most of the Pope's private audiences were moved to his apartments on the third floor of the apostolic palace, rather than the more formal rooms on the second floor. And during public liturgical celebrations, the Holy Father began to remain seating for most of the events; he would “preside” rather than acting as principal celebrant of the Mass.

The Pope's physical weakness became evident to the public in May 2002, during a pastoral trip to Azerbaijan and Bulgaria. For the first time, organizers of the papal trip made special provisions to accommodate his restricted mobility, bringing a moving platform to transport him, and an elevator to help him on and off the airplane.



The year 2003 saw both improvement and deterioration in the Pope's health. He was able to make a long trans-Atlantic trip to Canada and Central America, but during a visit to Slovakia in September he appeared to be in very severe condition, and observers felt his life was in imminent danger. In October, as the world's cardinals gathered for a consistory, there was open discussion about the possibility that they would soon meet again in a papal conclave. But by December the Pope had rallied, resuming his public appearances.

Although there was a near-universal agreement that the trip to Slovakia would be his last venture abroad, John Paul II traveled to Switzerland in June 2004, then made a Marian pilgrimage to Lourdes in August. He also traveled to Loretto, Italy, in September 2004—his last trip outside Rome. Since last late year, the Pope has curtailed his public activities still more. He presided at Christmas Mass, but did not attempt the traditional ordination of new bishops, or Baptism of infants, in early January.

During the early weeks of 2005, there have been relatively few major ceremonies at the Vatican, and there have been no plans made for papal travel abroad except a projected visit to Cologne, Germany, for World Youth Day in August.

On February 1, the Vatican press office announced that all papal audiences would be suspended, explaining that the Pope was suffering from the flu. But within 24 hours, John Paul was hospitalized with acute respiratory problems. Although he returned to the Vatican on February 10, he was unable to participate directly in the Lenten Retreat, for the first time in his 26-year pontificate, and on February 24 he was hospitalized once again. Doctors at Gemelli Hospital performed a tracheotomy to assist his breathing.

He returned to the Vatican once again for Holy Week, but could not participate in the liturgical celebrations—appearing only a few times, by video-conference, from his apartment. On Easter Sunday he did make a public appearance to deliver his *Urbi et Orbi* blessing, but struggled in vain to speak, and appeared to be in obvious pain.

Finally, on March 31, Joaquin Navarro-Valls disclosed that the Pope was suffering from a high fever, brought on by an infection of his urinary tract. This was followed by a drop in blood pressure, and heart failure, precipitating what appeared to be a final crisis. The Pope's declining health has been a topic of keen public interest for years—since May 13, 1981, when an assassination attempt first endangered his life. By May 2001, as Parkinson's disease robbed him of the physical vigor that he had displayed earlier in his pontificate, Navarro-Valls remarked that “the fatigue of John Paul II had become an element of his ministry.”

Colleagues observed that the Holy Father had made a conscious decision to allow the public to observe his suffering, remaining in public view as his health declined.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36227>

# Pope in critical condition after heart failure

## April 01, 2005

Pope John Paul II suffered heart failure on Thursday while under treatment for a urinary infection which caused a high fever. On April 1 his condition had been stabilized, and papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that the Holy Father was “lucid, fully conscious, and extraordinarily serene,” but conceded that his condition is “very grave.”

Navarro-Valls was clearly moved, his eyes brimming with tears, as he briefed reporters on the Pope’s condition at midday on Friday. Asked about his own emotions, the papal spokesman said that they should not be the focus of attention. He did concede, nevertheless, that “this is an image you have never seen here”—apparently referring to his own very visible distress. He said that the Pope’s overall condition had improved after a Thursday-night crisis, but his blood pressure remained “unstable” and his prognosis was poor. However, he flatly denied reports that the Pontiff had lapsed into a coma. The Holy Father, he added, is “extraordinarily serene.”

The Pope met with several top Vatican aides—including the Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, and the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—on Friday morning. Aides reported that the Pontiff had asked them to read to him from the Stations of the Cross, which he followed attentively. The Pope also prayed the Liturgy of the Hours with his aides, and concelebrated Mass.

Navarro-Valls said that the Pope had expressed his preference to remain at the Vatican, receiving care from a medical team in his own apartment rather than returning to the Gemelli Hospital.

Pope John Paul received the Anointing of the Sick on Thursday, and roads to the Vatican were closed, as the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square to pray for the Holy Father. Doctors observe that heart failure—as distinct from a heart attack—is usually a system of an irreparable physical breakdown.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Pope’s vicar for the Rome diocese—and the prelate who would probably have the responsibility of making the formal public announcement of the Pope’s death—issued a statement asking the faithful to pray more intensively for

John Paul II as he faces what appears to be his final struggle. Cardinal Ruini scheduled a special Mass, to be celebrated in the basilica of St. John Lateran, for Friday evening, and invited the faithful to come and join in prayer for the Pontiff.

*[CWN will follow the news from the Vatican and provide updates as available throughout the day.]*

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36209>

# More prayers for Pope from around the world

## April 01, 2005

Prayers and well-wishes continued to pour in to the Vatican from around the world on Friday as Catholic and non-Catholics joined in prayer for the ailing Pope John Paul II.

Sister Yvonne Reungoat, mother-general of the Salesian Sisters, sent a message to the more than 1,500 communities of the religious order throughout the world to ask them to pray for the Pope. “My dear sisters, we are all in profound union of prayer and offering for Pope John Paul II now in a very serious condition. Let us accompany him with filial affection and profound gratitude at this moment as he prepares for the great encounter with God. The joy of this Easter week and this coming Sunday of Divine Mercy, instituted by the Pope himself, fills our hearts with hope. United, we offer God our Father the life of the Pope totally given and consumed for the salvation of the world. May Mary, silent witness of the wonder of the Resurrection, comfort the Pope with her tender mother’s love.”

In Scotland, Cardinal Keith O’Brien of Edinburgh and St. Andrews, president of the bishops’ conference, said, “The world continues to be inspired by Pope John Paul II as he manages to bear daily testament to the gift of life, from its first beginnings until its natural end.”

The Missionaries of Charity at the “Home of the Pure in Heart” in Calcutta, India, the order founded by Blessed Mother Teresa, who was a close friend of the Pontiff, said that they and “the poorest of the poor and the dying whom they lovingly welcome, wash, and accompany to die in peace and dignity are offering their hardship and suffering for the Holy Father.”

In New Delhi, Catholics gathered in the cathedral for a special Mass celebrated by Archbishop Vincent Concessao. “People are praying everywhere for the Pope,” said a spokesman for the Indian bishops’ conference. “We have received messages of sympathy from many Hindus who assure us of prayers for the Holy Father. The media follow the situation closely. The Pope is deeply loved by Indian Catholics, and he is appreciated and respected also by non-Christians.”

Reports from China say that Catholics there appreciated the Communist

government's expressions of concern for the Holy Father and wishes for a recovery, despite recent conflicts over the appointment of bishops and arrests of underground clergy.

Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel Delly of Baghdad said, "We are deeply saddened by the news with regard to the Pope's health condition. We offer him the comfort of our prayers. Today our morning prayers and Mass were offered for the Pope and his intentions. We pray the Lord will strengthen him. We are all praying for the Pope. We Iraqi Catholics, bishops, clergy, religious, and laity, despite our daily difficulties are close to the Pope with prayers."

Reports have also come in of prayers from kindergarten children in Colombia, from orphanages in Guatemala, from shelters for the poor in Peru, and elsewhere.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36234>

# Prayerful Roman faithful await “a true Christian death”

April 01, 2005

As the vicar general of the Rome diocese organized a Rosary vigil in St. Peter’s square on the night of April 1, the theologian of the papal household said that he felt a “great emotion and sadness” at the impending death of Pope John Paul II.

Bishop Angelo Comastri, the vicar general, led the faithful in the Rosary as midnight approached in Rome. The bishop read meditations, composed by Pope John Paul, before each decade, drawing them from the Pope’s apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* .

An estimated 30,000 people had gathered in the square outside the apostolic palace, waiting for an announcement that was believed imminent, as Vatican officials disclosed that the Holy Father had begun to lose consciousness early Saturday morning, and his bodily systems were failing.

Cardinal Georges Cottier, the theologian to the pontifical household, said that John Paul II had shown “exemplary” courage and serenity as he faced death. “He lived in prayer,” the Swiss prelate said, and the Pontiff was intensely prayerful in his final hours.

“For months, he has entered into the mystery of the Cross of Jesus,” Cardinal Cottier said. “This is truly a Christian death—which means that his heart is alive with hope of the Resurrection.” Throughout his pontificate, the cardinal continued, John Paul II has been “a great apostle of hope.” He observed that “from the first day of his pontificate, he said, ‘Do not be afraid,’ when we were fearful, worried, with dark visions of the future.”

The great legacy of John Paul II will be his missionary dimension, the cardinal said. He offered the view that at the end of the Jubilee Year 2000, the Pope was “already tired, and I thought that would be the finale for him.” But John Paul II persevered, facing mounting pain and suffering, for more than four more years.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36235>

# Divine Mercy: April 2



# Friday evening bulletin: Pope's breathing shallow

April 01, 2005

The latest health bulletin from the Vatican press office at 7 pm Rome time said that Pope John Paul's breathing had become shallow, that he was suffering kidney failure beginning the process of poisoning his other organs, and that his "cardio-vascular system has worsened." Other media reports said the Holy Father had lost consciousness and that medical sources said there was no hope left.

Updates and news bulletins will follow as information becomes available.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36229>

# Cardinal Ruini leads prayers for Pontiff

April 01, 2005

Cardinal Camillo Ruini presided at a Mass celebrated for Pope John Paul II on Friday evening, in the basilica of St. John Lateran, before a large and highly emotional congregation, as news reports indicated that the Holy Father was near death.

Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and government leader Silvio Berlusconi were among the many people who crowded into the basilica—the official cathedral of the Roman Pontiff—for the ceremony.

“We are offering the Sacrifice of Christ for our father, brother, and friend,” said Cardinal Ruini in his homily. “John Paul II is in the middle of the most difficult trial of his long and extraordinary life.”

“In these hours of suffering, as in all of his tireless ministry, he is already seeing and touching the Lord,” the cardinal said. He spoke of the Pope’s “incredible force of soul, which has astonished so many people, his inexhaustible capacity for love and self-giving, his courage and unbelievable confidence.”

“Looking back on almost 27 years of this pontificate,” Cardinal Ruini said, “we are seized by an immense gratitude toward the man, Karol Wojtyła, and toward God who gave him to us.”

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36233>

# Pope clinging to life, slipping

## April 02, 2005

Pope John Paul II continued to cling to life on April 2, although his spokesman said that his condition remained “very grave,” and reported that the Holy Father had begun to lose consciousness early Saturday morning.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the director of the Vatican press office, told reporters that Mass had been celebrated in the Pope’s apartment early in the morning. At that time, he said, John Paul II seemed aware of his surroundings, and opened his eyes when someone addressed him, but otherwise “seems to be sleeping.” The Pope was not in a coma, he stressed, but his consciousness was “compromised” as his health failed.

During the night, Navarro-Valls said, the Pope had said several times, “I have looked for you. Now you have come to me. And I thank you.” The papal spokesman interpreted those words as a message to the young people who were gathered in a prayer vigil in St. Peter’s Square.

During the night, the square outside the papal apartment took on aspects of a World Youth Day celebration, with hundreds of young people praying and singing quiet hymns throughout the night, many of them holding candles, looking frequently up toward the windows of the Holy Father’s apartment on the third floor, where the lights remained on. The windows of the Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, also remained illuminated until very late at night.

Journalists also kept vigil at the Vatican, with many reporters choosing to sleep in the floor of the Vatican press office, at the entry to St. Peter’s Square. Meanwhile technicians began work at the Vatican installing the equipment that will be need to accommodate the College of Cardinals and the many thousands of people who are expected to gather for the Pope’s funeral.

The Pope was attended during the night by his personal physician, Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, and other medical personnel. His longtime priest-secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, was at his side throughout the Pope’s latest ordeal.

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# Saturday bulletin: Pope slipping in and out of consciousness

April 02, 2005

Pope John Paul remained on the verge of death Saturday morning, and his spokesman said his condition remained “substantially unchanged.”

“The general cardio-respiratory and metabolic conditions of the Holy Father are substantially unchanged and therefore are very serious,” said Joaquin Navarro-Valls. He added that the Pope was slipping in and out of consciousness.

The spokesman said that the Holy Father was mindful of the young people who had gathered beneath the windows of the papal apartments in St. Peter’s Square throughout the night as well as all the youth he had met throughout the world during his pontificate. Navarro-Valls said, “In fact, he seemed to be referring to them when, in his words, and repeated several times, he seemed to have said the following sentence: ‘I have looked for you. Now you have come to me. And I thank you.’”

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36236>

# Pope reported “smiling and serene” by visitors

## April 02, 2005

As colleagues and acquaintances of Pope John Paul II made their last visits to the Pontiff, a Roman prelate said that he was struck by the love in the Pope’s eyes, while an old Polish friend said flatly that Karol Wojtyla is a saint.

“John Paul II accepted his destiny in a way that we cannot even understand,” said Wanda Poltawska, a Polish friend of many years. “It is difficult to find someone who believes so deeply,” she added. “He is in touch with God. For him, that is reality.”

Poltawska spoke of the enormous strength she saw in Pope John Paul. “Naturally, in time, his energy became weaker; his body is old.” Nevertheless, she contended, “It is hard to find such a strong person.” That strength was evident in his final struggle, she added, when he suffered without complaint and clung to life long after the breakdown of his bodily processes. “His strength is not physical,” she concluded. “It is a strength of spirit.”

Poltawska, a psychiatrist who specializes with children, said that she understand the special appeal that John Paul II had for young people, because he “radiates the security that God is everywhere.” She said that she—along with many others who first became acquainted with Karol Wojtyla when he was a young priest in Krakow—had immediately recognized him as a man with special gifts. “Everyone is made for holiness,” she observed, “but he has been an exceptional person, in his humility, his simplicity, his delicacy.” His character never changed, she added, as he rose in prominence to become bishop, archbishop, cardinal, and Roman Pontiff.

Cardinal Mario Francesco Pompedda, the retired head of the Apostolic Signatura, made a visit to Pope John Paul on April 1; afterward he spoke of his impressions to the Italian daily *La Repubblica* .

The Pope seemed to be asleep, the Italian prelate said, when he entered the room. But when his name was mentioned, John Paul opened his eyes slowly, and Cardinal Pompedda said that he would never forget “the gentleness of his look.” The elderly cardinal said that he had knelt beside the Pope’s bed, taking his hand. John Paul II seemed to be making an attempt to speak, he said, but “nothing came out.” He said that

the Pontiff was “smiling and serene.”

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<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36238>

# Pope John Paul II has died

## April 02, 2005

Pope John Paul II died late on Saturday night, April 2, ending one of the longest and most influential pontificates in the history of the Catholic Church.

The Holy Father remained “extraordinarily serene” during his final illness, according to his spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls. He had suffered heart failure the previous evening while being treated for an infection of his urinary tract. As his condition deteriorated rapidly during the day on Friday and then Saturday, with his body wracked by septic shock and kidney failure, the Pope remained in prayer with his closest aides, losing consciousness only late in the evening before his death.

Pope John Paul was 84 years old at the time of his death. He had been afflicted by Parkinson’s disease, causing a serious curtailment of his activities, for several years. In February 2005, he was hospitalized twice for severe respiratory problems. Doctors at the Gemelli Hospital had inserted a tube in his throat to ease his breathing, and earlier this week the Vatican had disclosed that a feeding tube had also been inserted to provide him with supplementary nourishment because of his difficulty in swallowing.

The Pope’s last public appearance came on Easter Sunday, when he came to the balcony of his apartment in the apostolic palace to deliver the traditional *Urbi et Orbi* blessing. During that public appearance the Pope was in obvious pain, and unable to speak.

In October 1978, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, Poland, was elected the 264th Roman Pontiff—the youngest Pope of the 20th century and the first non-Italian to serve as leader of the Catholic world in over 400 years. He took the name John Paul II, and in a memorable first appearance as Pope, immediately won the hearts of the Roman crowd as he greeted them with the words of Jesus, which would echo throughout his 26-year pontificate: “Be not afraid!”

Only two Popes—Blessed Pius IX, who served over 31 years, and St. Peter himself—have held the papacy for longer than John Paul II. During his extraordinary pontificate, he became the most widely recognized man in human history, traveling to greet millions of people all around the world, and earning credit as one of the principal architects of the fall of Soviet Communism. His years in the papacy saw a series of

“firsts,” and an astonishing output of encyclicals, apostolic letters, and other writings.

Born in Wadowice, Poland, on May 18, 1920, Karol Wojtyla was raised primarily by his father, a military officer also named Karol, after his mother’s death in 1929. When his father died in 1941, he was left alone, as a student in Krakow’s Jagiellonian University. During the occupation of Poland by Nazi forces in World War II, he was pressed into labor as a stonecutter, then in a chemical factory, but worked with the Polish underground and maintained an avid interest in theater.

In 1942 the young Wojtyla entered a clandestine seminary, and after the war, in 1946, he was ordained by Cardinal Adam Sapieha of Krakow. He continued his studies in Rome under the famous French Dominican, Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, and earned degrees in theology and philosophy, with a dissertation on the mystical works of St. John of the Cross. He returned to Poland to teach at the Krakow seminary, while also serving as a parish priest, and forming friendships with a number of young families—friendships that remained intact throughout his life.

At the age of just 38 he was named an auxiliary bishop of Krakow by Pope Pius XII, and in 1962 he became the city’s archbishop. He was raised to the College of Cardinals by Pope Paul VI at the age of 47.

The scholarly young Polish prelate was an influential figure in the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council, taking a particularly active role in the writing of *Gaudium et Spes*, the dogmatic constitution on the Church and the modern world.

In August 1978, he took part in the conclave that elected Cardinal Albino Luciani of Venice to become Pope John Paul I; when that Pontiff died abruptly after just 33 days, he again entered the conclave—to emerge as Pope John Paul II.

During visits to his native Poland, John Paul II proved to be a lightning-rod for the growing opposition to the country’s Communist regime. On May 13, 1981, he was shot and severely wounded by Mehmet Ali Agca in an assassination attempt that took place immediately after a public audience in St. Peter’s Square. Vatican officials immediately suspected that the leaders of the Soviet Union had authorized the attempt on the Pope’s life—a hypothesis that appears to have been confirmed by documents recently discovered in the archives of the East German secret service.

Alongside his historic role in the fall of Communism, John Paul II has also been the world’s most influential defender of the dignity of human life; his memorable calls for the development of a “culture of life”—and his parallel denunciations of the “culture of death”—have been instrumental in rallying opposition to abortion, contraception, euthanasia, and embryonic-tissue research.

The Polish Pontiff was an ardent exponent of Christian unity, who made special



efforts to reach out to other Christian churches. He was especially insistent on the need to bring together the Eastern and Western Christian traditions, saying that the Church must “breathe with both lungs.”

By far the most traveled Pontiff in history, John Paul II made 104 trips outside Italy during his pontificate, as well as 146 inside the country. His long papacy saw a huge increase in the number of saints formally recognized by the Church; he beatified 1,338 people, and canonized 482. He was the author of 14 encyclicals, 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, 45 apostolic letters, and five books that appeared during the time he served as Pope.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36242>

# Youth keep night watch following Pope's death

## April 02, 2005

As Saturday, April 2, became Sunday, many young people continued to keep watch through the night in St. Peter's Square, just a few hours after the announcement of the death of Pope John Paul II.

While the whole world reacts to the death of the Holy Father, the young people of the diocese of Rome, his own diocese, gathered themselves before the Mass which was to be celebrated in his memory at 10:30 am on Sunday by the Italian Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

The announcement of the death of the Pope a little before 10 pm on Saturday took place at the end of the recitation of the Rosary prayed by the tens of thousands of the faithful in St. Peter's Square. The news spread quickly throughout Rome and the square and surrounding streets filled up with more than 100,000 people.

Later in the night, many young people remained in the square to pay their respects and pray. These young people of the "John Paul II Generation" sang hymns or recited prayers for the repose of the soul of the Holy Father. Many seemed stunned by the death of the Pope. Some gathered in small groups, around burning candles placed on the paving stones of the square, reciting the "Our Father" or decades of the "Hail Mary." Others with guitars, sang songs of the various World Youth Days—meetings instituted by John Paul II in 1985 - or chanted the name of the Pope, &apos;"Giovanni Paolo."

At other times, rounds of applause filled the square, a typically Italian tradition to show the affection of the crowd for the deceased. Among the young people who stayed there during the night were many of the Vatican bishops who spoken to the faithful at the beginning of the evening. Archbishop Renato Boccardo, secretary-general of Vatican City, did not hide not his emotion. "John Paul II leaves us all orphans," he said to the I Media news agency, adding that "the Pope not only taught us all how to live, but also how to die."

At the foot of the monumental statue of St. Peter, in front of the basilica that bears his name, a large white cloth was attached upon which dozens of young people had put their signature, around the inscription "JP II you are in our hearts." Also in the same

area, two girls hung a hastily created streamer with writing that said, “We are not afraid, because you are with us,” in reference to the first words of John Paul at the beginning of his pontificate on October 22, 1978, “Be not afraid.”

Bishop Francesco Lambiasi, a member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, had repeated those words at the beginning of the evening to the gathered faithful: “Be not be afraid, open, open wide the doors to Christ!” The bishop then invited the crowd to applaud the Pope for these words and the entirety of his great work.

After 3 am, the square much more sparsely populated than it had been just a few hours earlier. It seemed to stir once again to prepare for the arrival of tens of thousands of people for the Mass planned for 10:30 am on Sunday, in memory of the Holy Father. But the hardiest of the mourners did not hesitate to slip into sleeping bags, determined wait in the square until the Mass.

In the middle of the night, in the neighborhoods surrounding St. Peter’s Square, employees of the city of Rome placed barriers and prepared the square for the expected surge of pilgrims for the Mass to be celebrated by Cardinal Angelo Sodano. Others assembled an immense scaffolding, on the edge of the square, in order to accommodate the television cameras of the whole world.

View this item on CatholicCulture.org:

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=36244>

# Looking Back: Pope John Paul II Remembered

# John Paul remembered #1: thoughts of a boyhood friend

April 04, 2005

Looking back across a span of 75 years, a boyhood neighbor of John Paul II spoke recently of the simple but deep ties that bound him to the Pope in a lifelong friendship. The bonds that formed between young Karol Wojtyla and a Jewish boy who lived near him as a child in Wadowice, Poland, may also provide some perspective on the late Pope's deep commitment to dialogue across religious boundaries. Originally, Kluger said, his friendship with young Karol Wojtyla was formed around their mutual passion for sports. But as the years passed, the relationship evolved. Jerzy Kluger spoke to the I Media news agency in 2002 about a long and highly unusual friendship. Although he spoke of the Pope with great respect—referring to him as “His Holiness” as the interview began—Kluger could not stop himself from also speaking of “Lolek,” the nickname used by the Pope's close friends during his childhood. Like his old friend, Jerzy Kluger was a man of tremendous energy. Once an accomplished tournament tennis player, he continued playing for recreation as he passed his 80th birthday. An engineer by training, he was still working at the time of his interview with I Media. Kluger lived in Rome with his Catholic wife; a photo of the Pope baptizing his grand-daughter was prominently displayed in his office. Living in the same Wadowice neighborhood, the two boys played together often as young children, Kluger recalled; later they sat side by side in the local elementary school. He related how he and the future Pope had shared a great curiosity about the single police officer in Wadowice; they wanted to know whether the ceremonial sword that he wore was real or—as they suspected—wooden. One day the two little boys caught the policeman napping, drew the sword partially out of its scabbard to satisfy their curiosity, and were caught in the act when the policeman awoke. (The sword was real. Fortunately for the two young conspirators, the punishment was mostly symbolic.) Although he could not have predicted that his friend would become the Bishop of Rome, Kluger was not at all surprised when, during his pontificate, John Paul II earned a reputation as a special friend of the Jewish people. Kluger himself already recognized the Pope's affection for Jews. He observed: “His friendship for me and for my family shows it!” Kluger's father, a lawyer, was the president of the Jewish community that made up about one-fourth of the population in Wadowice before World War II. Everyone in the community knew, therefore, that Jerzy Kluger was Jewish. He remembered the day when he and Karol Wojtyla learned that they had been admitted to secondary school. Thinking that he had the news first, Kluger went to inform his friend. When he heard that young “Lolek” was at Mass, he ventured into a Catholic church for the first time to find him. As he entered, a woman who was leaving the church recognized him as a Jewish boy, and snubbed him conspicuously. Noticing the incident, young Karol Wojtyla—who was about 10 years old at the time—comforted his friend, saying, “Aren't we both children of God?” Later Kluger's grandmother would say that Wojtyla had a “sixth sense”—an unusual ability to say just the right thing to reassure someone in need. After their school days together, the two boys went their separate ways, and World War II completed the separation. Jerzy Kluger lost track of his old friend for more than 25 years, and moved to Rome to practice his profession. In November 1965, he read a newspaper article about “Archbishop Wojtyla” of Krakow, who was playing a major role in the discussions of Vatican II. After overcoming his initial astonishment, Kluger traced the Polish archbishop to his temporary lodgings in the city, and called, giving his name and saying that perhaps they could get together sometime. Kluger recalls receiving a somewhat intimidating reply that “His Excellency” was not available, but would return at 2 in the afternoon. At precisely 2, Kluger's phone rang, and a familiar voice boomed: “Come on over right now!” For hours the two old friends sat together, telling old stories and bringing each other up to date on what had happened to each of them, their families and friends, in the tumultuous years since their last meeting. “From that day forward, until his election, whenever he came to Rome we would see each other,” Kluger reported. When he heard that his friend has been elected Pope, Kluger admits that he was “too emotional to think about what it

meant.” A bit later he remembered that a mutual friend, Dr. Jan Kus, a Polish doctor, had predicted that Wojtyla would become the Roman Pontiff. And Jerzy Kluger reminded the I Media interviewer that “his first private audience was granted to me—a Jew—and my whole family.” As he looked back over the pontificate of his boyhood friend, Kluger advanced his own opinion that John Paul II, following in the footsteps of Blessed John XXIII, helped to remind Catholics that the Jewish people are the spiritual “elder brothers of Catholics.” In his view, the most important development of the pontificate was the establishment of diplomatic relations with the state of Israel in 1994. “Now,” Jerzy Kluger said, “we have to wait and see what the fruits will be.”

# John Paul remembered #2: from childhood to the papacy

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On May 18, 1920, Karol Wojtyla was born in Wadowice, a quiet town outside Krakow, in southern Poland. His family lived in a modest house in the center of town, next to the Catholic church. Although young Karol was remembered by his neighbors as an energetic and cheerful boy, his early years were marked by mourning. His mother Emilia died when he was 9, leaving him to live with his father, also named Karol, a retired military officer, and an older brother who was a medical student in Krakow. Three years later, in December 1932, his brother died of scarlet fever. As he grew, Wojtyla showed a keen interest in sports. He was an accomplished soccer player—a goalkeeper—and an avid hiker, swimmer, and tennis player. He also became involved in acting, joining a company led by Mieczyslaw Kotlarczyk, who introduced him to the deep cultural roots of the Polish theatrical tradition. In 1939, when he was admitted to the renowned Jagiellonian University, young Wojtyla moved with his father to Krakow. His studies were soon interrupted, however, by the Nazi invasion of Poland and the outbreak of World War II. The university was closed down by the German occupying forces, and Wojtyla took a job at the local Solvay chemical factory as a manual laborer. In February 1940, Karol Wojtyla met Jan Tyranowski, a layman who worked as a tailor, who was to have an enormous impact on the spiritual formation of the future Pope. Under Tyranowski's influence he became acquainted with the mystical writing of St. John of the Cross and the Carmelite spiritual tradition, and for a time considered entering the Carmelite order. In February 1941 the young man's life was disrupted by mourning once again, when he came home to find his father dead. Karol Wojtyla was now alone in a country scarred by warfare and poverty under a brutal Nazi occupation. During these years he rejoined his old dramatic mentor, Kotlarczyk, in an underground acting group in Krakow. By staging traditional Polish plays, reading poetry, and organizing philosophical soirees, the "Rhapsodic Theater" group sought to keep alive the country's native culture, and stiffen resistance against the German occupation. Again caught up in the excitement of the theater, Wojtyla thought about a career in acting. However, in the fall of 1942, Karol Wojtyla felt an unmistakable calling to the Catholic priesthood. Although seminaries had been closed down by the Nazi regime, he studied secretly in the residence of Archbishop Adam Sapieha, while continuing work in the chemical plant. In 1944, as Nazi troops began rounding up seminarians, the archbishop brought Wojtyla into his own residence, to live in the basement while he continued his priestly training. When World War II ended, Wojtyla resumed his studies in theology at the Jagiellonian University, and was ordained to the priesthood on November 1, 1946. He was sent to Rome—his first trip outside Poland—for further study at the Angelicum, where Dominican professors led him in a deep exploration of the work of St. Thomas Aquinas. During school vacations, he traveled across Europe, visiting France, Holland, and Belgium as well as other parts of Italy. In June 1948 he completed his doctorate, with a dissertation on St. John of the Cross, and returned to Krakow. By now Poland was living under a Stalinist government, bitterly hostile to Christianity. In his early parish assignments—first in rural Niegowic, then in central Krakow—the young priest set out energetically to counteract the influence of Communist ideology. He attracted a group of young Catholic families—many of whom would remain close friends throughout his life—and organized an ambitious program of intellectual and spiritual formation, punctuated by family outings, dramatic productions, and sporting events. In 1951, the young priest was encouraged to continue his studies, and took a second doctorate in philosophy, with a dissertation on the phenomenological work of Max Scheler. By 1954 he was teaching ethics and moral theology at schools in both Lublin and Krakow, while still serving as a parish priest. On July 1958, while he was leading a group of families in a kayaking and camping trip, Father Wojtyla received a summons to the office of the Polish primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who told him that he was to be appointed auxiliary bishop of Krakow. He continued to teach in Lublin, however, and published widely in philosophical journals while

maintaining a broad correspondence with other intellectual leaders in Poland and abroad. From 1963 to 1963, Bishop Wojtyla took part in the sessions of the Second Vatican Council. He was actively involved in writing several Council documents, most notably the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, on the Church in the modern world. After the second Council session in 1963, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and returned to learn that he had been appointed the new Archbishop of Krakow. Returning again to Poland, the new archbishop strove to make Krakow a model for the implementation of Vatican II. At the same time, he led a steady, quiet resistance to Communist ideology, frequently sparring with government authorities to protect religious freedom and promote Christian principles. In June 1967 the Polish archbishop received a red hat from Pope Paul VI, becoming at that time the youngest member of the College of Cardinals. His regular participation in synods in Rome brought him to wider attention among the world's other cardinals, as did his occasional trips abroad—notably a tour of the United States, where he lectured at several universities. In March 1976, he received a signal honor from Pope Paul when he was selected to preach the annual Lenten Retreat for the Roman Curia. Upon the death of Pope Paul VI, Cardinal Wojtyla was summoned to Rome to participate in the conclave that elected Pope John Paul I in August 1978. He had barely returned to Krakow when he heard that the newly elected Pontiff had died abruptly, and the cardinals were forced to return for a new conclave. This time, on October 16, 1978, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected.



# John Paul remembered #3: the pontificate in statistics

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The pontificate of John Paul II lasted for 26 years, 5 months, and 17 days, or a total of 9,665 days. Among the 264 Roman Pontiffs, only two have held the Chair of Peter for a longer tenure. St. Peter himself was the Vicar of Christ for somewhere between 34 and 37 years, by the best historical estimates. And the remarkable pontificate of Blessed Pius IX stretched from 1846 to 1878: for 31 years, 7 months, and 21 days. (The shortest papal reign in history was that of Pope Urban VII: a span of just 12 days, from September 15 to 27, 1590.) John Paul II was, by an enormous margin, the most widely traveled Pope in history. His 104 apostolic voyages outside Italy brought him to 129 different countries, and covered more than 725,000 miles—or roughly three times the distance between the earth and the moon. He also made 145 trips inside Italian territory (including 16 vacation trips to the Italian Alps, including every summer from 1987 through 2001, and again in 2004), in which he visited 259 different towns. Pope John Paul II spent than 1,000 days outside the Vatican: about 6 percent of his entire pontificate. As the Bishop of Rome, John Paul II placed a high priority on visits to the parishes of the diocese. He had made personal visits to 301 of the 328 parishes currently functioning in that diocese before his declining health forced him to stop. In December 1978, just 2 months after his election to the papacy, he began his parish visits, which continued through December 2002. At that point, since he was no longer able to visit parishes, he asked parish communities to visit him, meeting with them in the Paul VI auditorium at the Vatican. Over the ensuing months, 16 parishes held such meetings with the Pontiff; if they are included in the totals, then John Paul II actually “visited” 317—nearly 97 percent—of the active dioceses in Rome. Although he made a clear choice that he would *not* be confined to his office at the Vatican, John Paul II nevertheless managed to produce an enormous body of teaching. He promulgated 14 encyclicals, 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, 45 apostolic letters, and 28 *motu proprio*s. During his pontificate he held 1,165 general public audiences, and these Wednesday audiences drew a total of 17.7 million people. He also received approximately 1,000 state and government leaders in private audiences at the Vatican. During the pontificate of John Paul II, 83 countries established diplomatic relations with the Holy See. There are now a total of 174 countries that enjoy diplomatic relations with the Vatican, along with the Order of Malta, the Russian Federation, and the Palestinian National Authority. Within the Church, Pope John Paul II presided over 6 “ordinary” assemblies of the Synod of Bishops, 1 “extraordinary” session that was held in 1995 to mark the 20th anniversary of Vatican II, a series of 7 special assemblies for each continent (the European Synod met twice), one special synod for Lebanon, and a special synod in 1980—the first of his pontificate—for the bishops of the Netherlands. The College of Cardinals was convened on 6 different occasions to provide advice and counsel for Pope John Paul II. He also called 9 consistories, at which he created 231 new cardinals (plus one cardinal who was named *in pectore*, and whose name is not yet known). Of these, 170 cardinals are still alive, and 117 are under the age of 80, and thus eligible to vote for the next Pontiff. During his pontificate John Paul II presided at the ordination of 321 bishops, including his longtime personal secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz. In what may be the most spectacular record of record-setting pontificate, John Paul II also presided at 147 beatification ceremonies and 51 canonizations. He recognized more saints than the *combined* total of all the previous Popes since the Council of Trent closed in 1563. Since that time, when the standards for beatification and canonization were set, there have been 2,343 people beatified, and 785 canonized as saints; more than half—1,342 and 483, respectively—were raised to the altars during the pontificate of John Paul II.

# John Paul remembered #4: the Pope's inner circle

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Throughout his pontificate, Pope John Paul II relied on the advice and support that he drew from a close group of colleagues, friends, and assistants. Many of these associates developed considerable influence during his papacy. Some of the Pope's closest colleagues were the leading figures of the Roman Curia, such as Cardinals Joseph Ratzinger and Angelo Sodano—the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Secretary of State, respectively. Others were old friends from Poland, such as Cardinal Andrzej Maria Deskur, whose influence stemmed less from their official positions than from their ready access to the Holy Father. Without question, the man closest to John Paul II was Archbishop **Stanislaw Dziwisz**, who had served for many years as his private secretary. As a young priest, he had traveled with then-Bishop Karol Wojtyla to the sessions of Vatican II. When John Paul II was elected, the Polish cleric—who had not yet reached his 40th birthday—moved to Rome to continue his work alongside the Pontiff. Although he rarely spoke about his work, and for years he was modestly listed in the *Annuario Pontificio* as an “assistant to the Secretary of State,” he held enormous influence, as the man who controlled access to the Pope. Only a few prelates could obtain a papal audience without going through his Polish secretary; the paperwork that reached the Pope's desk also went through his hands. He lived in the papal apartments, spent every day with John Paul II, and spoke with him on virtually every topic. In 1998, the Pope rewarded his faithful aide for 20 years of loyal service by naming him a bishop; in 2003 he was raised to the status of archbishop. He remained with the Pope until his death, and will now await a new ecclesiastical assignment. Cardinal **Joseph Ratzinger** was known worldwide as the intellectual heavyweight among the Pope's aides, although John Paul II was very much an intellectual himself. The former Archbishop of Munich was tapped by the Pope in 1981 to become the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: the primary guardian of Catholic orthodoxy. Pope John Paul relied heavily on his advice, and although Cardinal Ratzinger made no secret of his wish to return to Germany, the Pope repeatedly extended his term of service at the Congregation, renewing his mandate every five years. Liberal Catholics saw Cardinal Ratzinger as their primary enemy in Rome, as he issued public cautions against deviations from doctrinal orthodoxy. The German cardinal did not shrink from controversy, when he saw it as necessary to safeguard the faith. He was largely responsible for the public disciplining of noted radical theologians such as Hans Küng in Germany and Charles Curran in the US, and for cautionary statements issued by the Vatican on liberation theology, feminism, and religious syncretism. These same activities made him a hero to many conservative Catholics, who were thrilled with his candid appraisal of Church problems in *The Ratzinger Report*, a book based on his conversations with journalist Vittorio Messori. Although often portrayed as the “grand inquisitor” or the “Panzerkardinal,” Cardinal Ratzinger is in fact a gentle, unassuming, and affable man. Despite his age (he will celebrate his 78th birthday just before the conclave) and a history of heart problems, he is regarded as a possible successor to John Paul II. Cardinal **Agostino Casaroli** was the Vatican Secretary of State during the early years of the pontificate, which coincided with the final years of the Cold War. The primary architect of the *Ostpolitik* strategy of engagement with the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, he remained the Secretary of State—essentially the 2nd-ranking official of the Holy See—until his retirement in 1990, when he was replaced by Cardinal Angelo Sodano. When he first appointed the Italian prelate as his Secretary of State in 1979, John Paul II caught many people by surprise; Cardinal Casaroli had not been particularly close to him, and his attitude toward Communist ideology was seen by many Polish Catholic leaders as overly friendly. In fact it was clear that the Pope himself preferred a more confrontational approach. Nevertheless he admired Cardinal Casaroli's intellectual abilities, and perhaps saw him as a useful counterbalance. Pope John Paul was deeply moved by the Italian cardinal's death in June 1998. Cardinal **Roger Etchegaray**, the former Archbishop of Marseille, frequently served as

an official papal envoy, representing John Paul II on foreign missions that the Pontiff himself could not undertake. Originally brought to Rome as president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 1984, he became a frequent traveler, representing the Holy See in delicate talks in places such as China, Cuba, and Rwanda. An imposing man and a tireless diplomat, he was given the leading role in bringing together representatives of all different faiths for a day of prayer for peace in Assisi in 1986. As he reached retirement age, the Pope asked the French cardinal to head the committee preparing for the Grand Jubilee in 2000. Later he resumed his globe-trotting missions, making special diplomatic trips to Israel, China, and Iraq. Cardinal **Giovanni Battista Re** is a master of Vatican affairs. Although he was trained for diplomatic service, he has spent most of his life working within the Vatican itself. He was appointed by John Paul II as the secretary of the Congregation for Bishops, then in 1989 to the highly influential post of *sostituto*, or deputy Secretary of State. In that role he supervised the day-to-day paperwork of Vatican affairs, earning wide respect for his administrative abilities. In fact there was some speculation that Pope John Paul regarded him as irreplaceable, and would keep him on as *sostituto* to the end of his pontificate. But in 2000 he was named a cardinal, and prefect of the Congregation for Bishops. From that time forward he met weekly with the Pope to discuss the appointment of new bishops all around the world. One of the Pope's closest allies outside Rome was Cardinal **Jean-Marie Lustiger**. The Pope's nomination of this Jewish convert, whose mother died at Auschwitz, to become Archbishop of Paris was another surprise, but John Paul II appreciated the French prelate's independent character and his strength of intellect. Cardinal Lustiger visited Rome frequently as a member of the Congregation for Bishops, and during those visits he would regularly have long private conversations with the Pope—although his visits to the third floor of the apostolic palace were rarely disclosed to the public. Although he was not a close personal acquaintance, the Pope regarded the late Cardinal **John O'Connor** of New York as one of his key appointments. The son of a working family, the American prelate had served as a military chaplain in Vietnam and risen through the ranks to head the US military vicariate. When he was personally selected by the Pope to head the New York archdiocese—shortly after having been named as bishop of the smaller Scranton, Pennsylvania diocese—Cardinal O'Connor quickly emerged as an influential figure in US public affairs, particularly in his opposition to abortion. Within the Vatican the American cardinal was highly regarded for his handling of the mass media. The director of the Vatican press office, **Joaquin Navarro-Valls**, was one of the few lay people in the Pope's inner circle. He had free access to the papal apartments—a status that sparked jealousy among some high-ranking prelates who did not have the same privilege—and traveled with John Paul II on both foreign voyages and vacation trips to the Italian Alps. Although he was originally trained as a psychiatrist, Navarro-Valls became a polished journalist and a skilled publicist. Under his guidance the Vatican took some major steps forward in recognizing and using the influence of the media.

# John Paul remembered #5: the Pope's international policy

April 06, 2005

Armed solely with the force of moral suasion, Pope John Paul II presided over an activist Vatican foreign policy, vastly increasing the international influence of the Holy See and helping to shape the world of the 21st century. While Vatican diplomacy is always subordinate to the Church's primary mission of evangelization, the Vatican's diplomatic efforts span the globe, and the 26-year pontificate of John Paul II saw a tremendous increase in the international activity of the Holy See. Pope John Paul himself was an inveterate traveler, visiting most of the world's countries—although two important trips that he had hoped to make, to Russia and to China, never came to pass. The Pope was also a powerful voice in international affairs: an outspoken opponent of Communism, an ardent defender of human life, a voice for world peace, and in recent years a defender of Europe's Christian cultural patrimony. Shortly after his election to the papacy in October 1978, Pope John Paul made the striking observation that there would no longer be a "Church of silence" in the Communist world; henceforth the Christians of Eastern Europe would be heard through the voice of the Pope. Thus he signaled his determination to play an active role in international affairs, with a political outlook based on his commitment to human rights. In June 1979 the Pope returned to his native Poland for a pastoral visit, which was marked by massive, emotional public demonstrations of popular support, at a time when the Solidarity labor movement was beginning to gather strength. From that moment, he was universally recognized as a threat to the Soviet empire. Years later, in 1992, Mikhail Gorbachev would observe: "Nothing that has happened in Eastern Europe in recent years would have been possible without the presence of the Pope." In his first speech to the UN, on October 2, 1979, the Holy Father captured the attention of international leaders with a performance that demonstrated both his command of the audience and his commitment to policies based on fundamental human rights. His speech set the tone for all his future initiatives on the diplomatic front, emphasizing the defense of human dignity and insisting that injustice undermines the cause of peace. The young Pope also showed his audacity, in an address that contained a barely veiled criticism of Soviet Communist ideology.

**The Beagle Canal crisis** The first clear application of the Pope's political influence came during the crisis that arose between Argentine and Chile in 1978, in a dispute over the Beagle Canal. As tensions rose, the Pope urged the bishops of the two Latin American countries to become involved. Then John Paul himself intervened, offering to mediate the dispute and sending a personal representative, Cardinal Samore, to visit the heads of both governments. The Pope's intervention led to an immediate military de-escalation, and the two countries continued to negotiate, with the Pope's envoy actively involved, until they reached a final accord on the Beagle Canal in January 1984. In a direct acknowledgment of the Pope's role, the foreign ministers of Argentina and Chile traveled to Rome to sign the agreement, in the presence of the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli. The Pope's marked success in his first major foray into international affairs won the attention of other world leaders. Papal statements on foreign policy—and particularly the overviews that he furnished in his annual address to the Vatican diplomatic corps—began to command careful attention.

**Relations with Russia** The pontificate of John Paul II saw profound changes in the structure of the Soviet government, ending in the collapse of the Communist regime. Today few observers deny that the Pope played an important role—perhaps the decisive role—in the fall of Communism. But he never fulfilled a cherished ambition to make a personal visit to Russia. In 1988 Russia celebrated the 1000th anniversary of Christianity there, and President Gorbachev invited Cardinal Casaroli to attend the anniversary celebration. In return the Pope received Gorbachev at the Vatican in December 1989—after the fall of the Berlin Wall—and the Holy See established diplomatic ties with Russia in March 1990. Although he was successful in his dealings with Russian political leaders, John Paul II was unable to establish a rapport with the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II, and the continued hostility of the Russian hierarchy frustrated his desire to visit Moscow. Despite

several Vatican initiatives, Patriarch Alexei never even agreed to a meeting with the Pontiff. One such “summit meeting” was tentatively scheduled to take place in Vienna in 1997, but the Russian prelate cancelled the plans after a dispute over the wording of a proposed joint statement. Orthodox officials also rebuffed a proposal that the Pope might visit Russian soil on his return from a proposed visit to Mongolia in August 2003—a visit that was eventually abandoned because of the Pope’s declining health. Nevertheless Pope John Paul made a last dramatic gesture of goodwill toward the Russian Orthodox Church, arranging for the return of a revered icon of Our Lady of Kazan, which was carried to Moscow by Cardinal Walter Kasper in August 2004. Russian political leaders strongly favored a papal visit to their country, but John Paul II would not make the trip without an accompanying invitation from the Moscow patriarchate. Since Alexei II is now suffering from poor health, it may be left to his successor to decide on an invitation to the next Roman Pontiff. But a visit by some future Pope would not have the same impact as a trip to Moscow by John Paul II: a man who had personally suffered under Communist leadership, and stood as a living symbol of resistance to Soviet ideology.

**Openings toward China** Another thwarted ambition of Pope John Paul II was to visit China, to rally the Catholics who have suffered for over 50 years there. From time to time during his pontificate there were rumors of secret talks with Beijing, which could lead to the establishment of diplomatic ties. But the Chinese regime maintained its open hostility, refusing to recognize the Vatican and continuing its oppression and harassment of the “underground” Church loyal to the Holy See. In 1983 the Pope made a personal appeal to China’s leader Deng Xiaoping. In both 1989 and 1995, during apostolic voyages to Asia, he called for the opening of Chinese society, and particularly a respect for religious freedom. During a stay in Manila in January 1995, he broadcast a message to China, reading the text in the Chinese language, urging the country’s Catholics to work for “communion and reconciliation” between those recognized by the government and those openly allied with Rome. In that respect the Pope’s quiet efforts were evidently fruitful; most of the Catholic bishops recognized by the Beijing government have reportedly established contact with the Holy See, and—in defiance of official government policy—expressed their fealty to the Pope.

**The Balkans** After the fall of Communism, Yugoslavia was a powder-keg, which exploded in violence in 1991. Pope John Paul II frequently expressed his grave concern about the violence that ensued, and particularly the savage treatment of religious minorities in the Balkans. In January 1992 the Holy See was among the first international bodies to recognize the independence of Croatia, a mainly Catholic state; but the Pope did not cease to plead for the rights of both Christians and Muslims who were the victims of an “ethnic cleansing” campaign. In 1993 he issued a call for international leaders to “disarm the aggressor”—an evident call for restraints on the Serbian military leaders who are now facing war-crimes trials for their brutal conduct during the Balkan wars.

**The troubled Middle East** It would be difficult to list all of the efforts taken by Pope John Paul II to promote peace in the Middle East during his pontificate. But his involvement in Lebanon is typical of his activist approach. During the civil war there in the 1980s the Pope made frequent pleas, not only to political leaders in Lebanon itself but to their neighbors in Israel, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and even Libya, as well as to terrorist leaders and the great powers of the Western world. Always calling for “national reconciliation,” the Pope sought to unify the divided Christian community of the country, while urging a withdrawal of Syria’s troops and a restoration of real Lebanese sovereignty. Most other international leaders took a passive attitude toward the Syrian occupation, but the Pope continued his opposition. In a sharply worded May 1989 message to UN leaders, he decried what he described as the systematic destruction of Lebanese culture. Pope John Paul opposed the US-led military campaign against Iraq in 1990, and the economic sanctions that followed; he argued that the international embargo caused suffering among vulnerable civilians without influencing the regime of Saddam Hussein. In 1995 he made plans for a visit to Iraq, to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the Biblical patriarch Abraham; that visit was cancelled when Vatican officials became convinced that the Pope’s presence would be manipulated by Iraqi leaders for their own political ends. After the attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, the Pope unequivocally denounced such acts of terror, and he did not oppose the American military campaign against terrorist groups and their allies in Afghanistan. However he again opposed a military campaign against Iraq, specifically rejecting the American argument that this would be a “preventive war.” In the weeks leading up to the beginning of hostilities in March 2002, the Pope made a series of last-minute bids to preserve the peace, sending personal representatives to both Baghdad and Washington in an unsuccessful effort to revive diplomatic talks.

**Israel and Palestine** During the Jubilee Year 2000, John Paul II made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land: a trip with major diplomatic as well as religious implications. He was the first Roman Pontiff ever to visit the State of Israel. (It was during his

pontificate that diplomatic ties between Israel and the Holy See had been started by the “fundamental accord” of 1993, and completed with the exchange of ambassadors in 1994.) But his appeals for peace in the Holy Land were unavailing. Throughout his pontificate the Pope and his diplomatic representatives were consistent in their prescriptions for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine: the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; the creation of two independent states; the respectful observance of existing international agreements for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territory; and the creation of a special international status for the city of Jerusalem, ensuring free access to the holy sites of all the great monotheistic faiths. **Europe’s Christian patrimony** The last great political campaign undertaken by Pope John Paul was an effort to preserve the Christian heritage of Europe. Long an advocate of European unity, the Pope welcomed the creation of the European Union. But he decried the political trends that, he observed, were leading to “the marginalization of the religions that contributed—and are still contributing—to the culture of humanism of which Europe is justly proud.” It is the shared patrimony of Christian culture that unites the societies of Europe, the Pope argued; a European community stripped of that Christian heritage has no fundamental principle on which to build its future and resolve its disagreements. The Pope worked energetically for the inclusion of some specific reference to the Christian heritage in the constitution of the European Union. His advice was ignored, and the constitution contained only a general reference to unspecified religious influences. But to the day of his death, Pope John Paul continued to issue calls for an appreciation of the Christian role in modern society. Clearly he believed that his voice could still influence public opinion, playing an educational as well as evangelical role. The Pontiff whose public defense of human rights had helped to bring down the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe was convinced that through the same sort of public advocacy, he could help restore an appreciation for Christian culture in Western Europe as well.

# John Paul remembered #6: the 14 encyclicals

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During his 26-year pontificate, John Paul II wrote 14 encyclical letters. The *number* of John Paul's encyclicals was not extraordinary. Among his predecessors, Pope John XXIII produced 8 encyclicals, and Pope Paul VI wrote 7, during much shorter reigns. Pope Pius XII produced a remarkable 41 encyclicals! But Pope John Paul II broke new ground with the length and depth of his work—as befits a Pontiff who was an accomplished philosopher and theologian. If encyclicals are measured by the sheer volume of words, his output easily takes first place. An encyclical is a teaching document. It is a letter addressed to the bishops of the world, and through them to all the faithful. In some cases an encyclical is intended simply to deepen understanding of the Catholic faith; in other cases the Pope cautions against popular trends. Among the 14 encyclicals of Pope John Paul II, several are purely theological. In this category one could place his remarkable trilogy of encyclical letters on the Holy Trinity. *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) centered on the person of Jesus Christ as the true savior of mankind. *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) focused on God the Father; *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986) was dedicated to the Holy Spirit. Pope John Paul enlarged this series with *Redemptoris Mater* (1987), on the role of the Virgin Mary as the “first disciple” and the perfect model of Christian witness. *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) explored the mission of the Church in spreading the Gospel while promoting the dignity of man. From the outset of his pontificate, John Paul II emphasized the importance of human rights and human dignity. In *Laborem Exercens* (1981) he drew on his own experience as a manual laborer in a Polish chemical factory to proclaim the dignity of productive labor. Later, in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1988), he applied the same line of thought to the world's economic structures, demanding respect for the economic rights of people living in impoverished nations. The late Pope continued that series of encyclicals with four others that delve into the roots of modern society. In *Centesimus Annus* (1991) he welcomed the collapse of Soviet socialism, but warned against the excesses of modern market capitalism. *Veritatis Splendor* (1993) analyzed the crisis of modern culture, tracing it to an unwillingness to observe the primary tenets of natural law. And *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) was a powerful indictment of the “culture of death.” In *Fides et Ratio* (1998) the Holy Father explained that a proper understanding of life can be attained only through a cooperation between secular and religious knowledge—between faith and reason. Two of Pope John Paul's encyclicals were dedicated to the specific topics of evangelization and ecumenism. *Slavorum Apostoli* (1985) extolled the missionary work of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who brought the Christian faith to Eastern Europe. *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) was an impassioned argument for the restoration of unity among Christ's followers. The Pope's final encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2000), did not have the same public impact as earlier letters such as *Evangelium Vitae*. It was a more personal document, dedicated to veneration of the Blessed Sacrament. A full listing of the encyclicals of Pope John Paul II, with their dates of promulgation and a quick synopsis of their arguments, follows:

1. *Redemptor Hominis* promulgated on March 15, 1979, set forth one of the great themes of the pontificate: that man can only discover his true identity in Christ, the sole savior of humanity. For the entire 26 years of his reign on Peter's throne, Pope John Paul would encourage the faithful to focus their attention on Jesus: to “look upon face of Christ.”

2. *Dives in Misericordia*, promulgated on December 2, 1980, was a deep theological meditation on God the Father, and especially his infinite mercy. It is essential to recognize that mercy, the Pope said, in order to build a just society on earth; men recognize themselves as brothers only in the light of their heavenly Father. This encyclical showed the heavy influence of Sister Faustina, the Polish nun who popularized the Divine Mercy devotion, and whom Pope John Paul would eventually canonize.
3. *Laborem Exercens*, promulgated on September 15, 1981, was John Paul's first social encyclical. Here he reiterated the Church's teachings requiring just compensation for workers, and condemned the class warfare inspired by Marxism. But he also advanced the argument that labor has its own intrinsic dignity as a means of cooperating in God's work of creation.
4. *Slavorum Apostoli*, promulgated on July 2, 1985, expressed the Pope's deep attachment to the Eastern tradition of Christianity, and his keen concern for restoring unity between the Catholic and Orthodox churches.
5. *Dominum et Vivificantem*, promulgated on May 30, 1986, completed John Paul's trilogy on the Holy Trinity. It is the Holy Spirit, the Pope wrote, who makes men recognize good and evil, and inspires us to seek God's pardon for our sins. The failure to respond is the "sin against the Holy Spirit," and the role of the Church is to make the world more conscious of the Spirit's call.
6. *Redemptoris Mater*, promulgated on March 25, 1987—the feast of the Annunciation—proposed the Virgin Mary as a model of feminine dignity and Christian discipleship. Pope John Paul expressed his own deep Marian devotion, and paid homage to the Marian traditions of the Eastern churches.
7. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, promulgated on February 19, 1988, contained the Pope's series of social encyclicals, with a demand for justice in the treatment of the Third World. Pope John Paul called for reforms in international political and economic systems, to give impoverished people greater control of their own development.
8. *Redemptoris Missio*, promulgated on January 22, 1991, recalled that Jesus offers salvation to all mankind, and calls the Church to spread the message of salvation throughout the world. Pope John Paul emphasized that the Church "proposes, never imposes" the faith. But in light of the loss of faith in traditionally Catholic societies, he called for a "new evangelization"—raising another theme that



would resound throughout the remainder of his pontificate.

9. *Centesimus Annus*, promulgated on May 1, 1991, was issued to commemorate *Rerum Novarum*, in which Pope Leo XIII inaugurated the great tradition of social encyclicals. Commenting on the collapse of the Soviet empire, John Paul II noted the spiritual aridity of Marxist thought, and noted that the people of Eastern Europe had overthrown a totalitarian regime armed only with “truth and justice.” He cautioned, however, against the excesses of capitalism deprived of moral guidance, and governed solely by consumerism.
10. *Veritatis Splendor*, promulgated on October 5, 1993, was a philosophical exposition of natural law. John Paul II delivered a compelling argument that fundamental moral laws are inscribed on the human heart; he then drew out the argument to show that these moral laws should guide world leaders to reject abortion, euthanasia, and other evils.
11. *Evangelium Vitae*, promulgated on March 30, 1995, continued the argument from natural law, condemning the “culture of death” that has emerged in the modern world. Pope John Paul categorically stated that no Catholic can support laws allowing legal abortion or euthanasia. He also called for an end to the use of the death penalty.
12. *Ut Unum Sint*, promulgated on May 30, 1995, was the Pope’s most emphatic plea for ecumenical cooperation. He remarked that the Bishop of Rome should be the focus of unity among Christ’s followers, and in a dramatic gesture he asked for other Christian leaders to help the Church consider how the papacy could better serve the cause of Christian unity.
13. *Fides et Ratio*, promulgated on October 15, 1998, was the last philosophical treatise among the late Pope’s encyclicals. Here he traced many of the problems of modern thought to a misguided belief that faith and reason are incompatible—whereas, he insisted, they must work together to allow a full understanding of the purpose of life.
14. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, promulgated on April 17, 2003—Holy Thursday—followed upon the Pope’s declaration of the current Year of the Eucharist. In this last encyclical John Paul II said that the Eucharist must be the center of all Christian life, and cautioned against abuses of the Eucharistic liturgy.

# John Paul remembered #7: a treasury of papal writings

April 12, 2005

During his 26-year pontificate, John Paul II produced over 100 official papal documents. Although his 14 encyclical letters constitute the most prominent category, he also wrote 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, 45 apostolic letters, and 28 *motu proprio*s. Along with these official documents, which fall neatly into the traditional categories of pontifical writing, John Paul II also wrote a series of lengthy personal letters to different categories of people. Each year, on Holy Thursday, he wrote to the world's priests. He also penned letters to the bishops on the Eucharist (1980), to religious on the Marian year (1988), to families for the year of the family (1994), to children (1994), to women (1995), to artists (1999), and to the aged (also 1999). Well before his election to the See of Peter, Karol Wojtyla had been a prolific writer, producing books, poems, and essays. Probably the most important of his full-length works, prior to becoming Pope, was his book *Love and Responsibility* (1960). But he also wrote dramatic works such as *The Tailor's Shop* (also 1960). Even as a seminarian he had offered poetry, written then under a pseudonym, for publication in Polish reviews. This outpouring of written work continued even after his papal election. In addition to the official documents listed above, he wrote *Gift and Mystery*, a meditation on the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination, in 1996, and collaborated with journalist Vittorio Messori on the book-length interview entitled *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* in 1994. His prose-poem *Roman Triptych* appeared in 2003, soon to be followed by *Arise, Let Us Be on Our Way!*, a book about his pastoral experiences as a bishop, in 2003. His last book, *Memory and Identity*, in which he shared thoughts about the 20th century with two old friends, appeared in February 2005. **The apostolic exhortations** An apostolic exhortation is similar to an encyclical, in that the Pope uses this form to address a particular issue. Of the 15 apostolic exhortations of Pope John Paul II, 13 were written to summarize the results of particular synods. When he convened synods of bishops from particular continents, Pope John Paul made it his habit to release the following apostolic exhortation during a pastoral visit to that region. His apostolic exhortations were:

1. *Catechesi Tradendae* (October 1979), on catechetical instruction, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in September 1977, during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI.
2. *Familiaris Consortio* (December 1981), on Christian family life, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in October 1980.
3. *Redemptionis Donum* (March 1984), on religious life in light of the redemption—one of the 2 apostolic exhortations not responding to a Synod meeting.
4. *Reconciliatio et Penitentia* (December 1984), on the sacrament of Penance, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in September-October 1983.

5. *Christifideles Laici* (January 1989), on the vocation of lay Catholics, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in October 1987.
6. *Redemptoris Custos* (October 1989), on the figure of St. Joseph in the life of Jesus and of the Church—the other apostolic exhortations not responding to a Synod meeting, written shortly after the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, which was devoted to the Virgin Mary.
7. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (April 1992), on the vocation and formation of priests, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in September-October 1990.
8. *Ecclesia in Africa* (September 1995), on the challenges confronting the Church in Africa, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in April-May 1995.
9. *Vita Consecrata* (March 1996), on the vocation of religious, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in October 1994.
10. *Une espérance nouvelle pour le Liban* (May 1997), on the crisis in Lebanon—promulgated in French, in an unusual gesture for a pontifical document—following the Synod of Bishops on that country which met in November-December 1995.
11. *Ecclesia in America* (January 1999), on the church in the New World, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in November-December 1997.
12. *Ecclesia in Asia* (November 1999), following the Synod of Bishops from that continent which met in April-May 1998.
13. *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 2001), following the Synod of Bishops from that which met in November-December 1998.
14. *Ecclesia in Europe* (June 2003), following the Synod of Bishops from that continent which met in October 1999.
15. *Pastores Gregis* (October 2003), on the vocation of diocesan bishops, following the Synod of Bishops on that topic which met in September-October 2001.

**The apostolic constitutions** An apostolic constitution—equivalent to a “papal bull” under the forms of canon law—announces important papal decisions on matters of faith and morals, or administration of the Church. Those of John Paul II were:

1. *Scripturam Thesaurus* (April 1979), on the use of the Scriptures.
2. *Sapientia Cristiana* (May 1979), on the governance of ecclesiastical university faculties.
3. *Magnum Matrimonii Sacramentum* (October 1982), establishing the pontifical institute for studies on marriage and the family.
4. *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges* (January 1983), promulgating the new *Code of Canon Law*.
5. *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* (February 1983), revising the procedures for the beatification and canonization of saints.
6. *Spirituali Militum Curae* (May 1986), revising the regulations for military chaplains.
7. *Pastor Bonus* (June 1988), outlining changes in the jurisdiction and workings of the Roman Curia—only the 3rd such reform since the Curia had been established by Pope Sixtus V in 1538.
8. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (September 1990), setting standards for the preservation of orthodox instruction in Catholic universities.
9. *Fidei Depositum* (November 1992), promulgating the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
10. *Universi Dominici Gregis* (February 1996), revising the procedures to be followed when the death of the Pope causes a vacancy at the Holy See.
11. *Ecclesia in Urbe* (February 1998), making administrative changes in the vicariate of Rome.

**The apostolic letters** Apostolic letters are generally addressed to particular persons, or groups of people, in order to advance the understanding of certain Church teachings. Often an apostolic letter is released on the occasion of an important event in the history of the Church, such as the Jubilee Year of 2000. Other apostolic letters may address issues that are the focus of particular dispute at the time they are released. The 44 apostolic letters of John Paul II form a body of work too large to analyze—or even to list—in this confined space. But several of the late Pontiff’s apostolic letters had a great impact on public opinion and on the life of the Church.

- *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, issued on May 22, 1994, may have been John Paul’s most controversial apostolic letter. In it he announced “in a definitive mode” that the Catholic priesthood is reserved to men, and therefore the Church cannot ever ordain women. Making this announcement in unquestionable terms, the Pope

also made it clear that his successors would be bound by the same restriction, since the all-male priesthood was established not by human rules but by divine command.

- *Mulieris Dignitatem*, issued on August 15, 1998, was a profound reflection on the dignity and role of women. The Holy Father called for a greater recognition of the particular gifts of femininity, which revolve around the capacity for motherhood (spiritual as well as physical) and the “gift of self,” and urged greater opportunities for women to develop those gifts and use them in the Church and in society.
- *Orientalis Lumen*, issued on May 2, 1995, was one of several documents in which John Paul II underlined the importance of ecumenical progress. In this apostolic letter he insisted that the Western Church should learn from the Eastern tradition, and together they should forge a new Christian culture, leaving behind the “reciprocal ignorance” that has marred past relations.
- *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, issued on October 16, 2002, may have been the most personal apostolic letter of John Paul II, and perhaps the most sensational as well. In it he reflected on praying the Rosary, and took the astonishing step of introducing the five “luminous mysteries”—the first such change in the form of the prayer since it had been introduced to St. Dominic.
- *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, issued on November 14, 1994, and *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, issued on January 6, 2001, both referred to the arrival of the year 2000, and the opening of the third millennium of Christianity. In the former, John Paul announced his intentions for the Jubilee year; the latter urged a new missionary impulse, encouraging Christians to “cast out into the deep” in promoting the faith.

**The Motu Proprio’s** A “motu proprio” is a canonical act by which the Pope issues an order that takes the form of canon law. Three of the 28 decrees issued in this form by Pope John Paul II had particularly noteworthy effects:

- *Ecclesia Dei*, signed on July 2, 1988, recognized the schism that occurred when Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre ordained four bishops for his traditionalist movement in defiance of Vatican warnings. At the same time the Holy Father set up a commission to “facilitate the full ecclesial communion” of priests, seminarians, and religious who wished to remain in full union with the Holy See while preserving their devotion to the traditional liturgy.

- *Apostolos Suos*, published on July 23, 1998, dwelt on the authority of episcopal conferences, making it clear that these conferences exist to help diocesan bishops, rather than to supervise them. The document warned against the “bureaucratization” of national bishops’ conferences, and the unfortunate tendency to see the conference as a “filter” or mediator in relations between the individual bishops and the Holy See. The document indicated that documents issued by bishops’ conference carried full teaching authority only if they received the unanimous approval of the bishops.
- *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutella*, signed on April 30, 2001, was a confidential document, sent to the world’s bishops a month after it was signed, dealing with the discipline due to priests who are guilty of “grave faults”—a reference to the sex-abuse scandal that was shaking the Catholic Church in the US. This *motu proprio* confirmed that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith would have jurisdiction for the handling of offenses in three areas: offenses against the Blessed Sacrament, violations of the sacrament of Penance, and abuses of children.

# John Paul remembered #8: the case for quick beatification

## April 14, 2005

On the day after his death, the Vatican's former Secretary of State referred to him openly as "John Paul the Great." During his funeral, many of the faithful in St. Peter's Square brandished signs saying *Santo subito*, demanding his quick canonization. In the weeks following his death, reports of miracles attributed to his intercession have flooded into the Vatican. Although Church rules require a 5-year waiting period before a cause for his beatification can be opened, the next Pope will be under heavy pressure to waive those rules, and begin the process immediately. Pope John Paul II himself approved the new guidelines for beatification and canonization—including the rule that calls for a 5-year waiting period after the candidate's death. The purpose of that rule is obvious: to ensure that the Church proceeds on the basis of calm consideration rather than passing emotion. At the same time, John Paul II also personally waived the rule in one noteworthy case: that of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. There too, the logic of his decision was self-evident. Mother Teresa's reputation for sanctity was so widespread, and the public reverence for her so intense, that the ultimate result of the Church's investigation seemed to be a foregone conclusion. The long 5-year delay would have served only to frustrate the faithful, making it appear that the Church placed more value on abstract rules than on human models of holiness. Would the same logic apply to the case of John Paul II? Many observers—including many prudent Vatican veterans—have spoken in terms that suggest they are utterly convinced of the Pope's sanctity. Cardinal Angelo Sodano said in his homily at a Mass on April 2, that the deceased Pope was now "in the serenity of the saints." And by referring to him as "John Paul the Great" the Italian prelate implicitly compared him with only three other Pontiffs: Leo I (440- 461), Gregory I (590- 604), and Nicholas I (858- 867)—all of them canonized saints. Cardinal Sodano, to be sure, was not the first to confer that title on the late Pontiff. For several years the title had been suggested quietly by the Pope's most enthusiastic admirers. On March 13, 2005, one Tanzanian prelate became the first to say the words aloud in St. Peter's square. After visiting John Paul II in Gemelli hospital, Bishop Desiderius Rwoma declared: "Certain Popes are called 'the great,' and I don't think we need to wait for his death of call him by that title." Since the Pope's death, many other prelates and Vatican officials have expressed their own confidence in the personal holiness of John Paul II. Preaching at his funeral, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said the faithful could be sure that "our beloved Pope is standing today at the window of our Father's house." Cardinal Eugenio Sales de Araujo, preaching at a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on April 8, said that John Paul II is now "celebrating the eternal liturgy with all the saints and the Virgin Mary" and experiencing "the ineffable presence of Jesus Christ." Meanwhile letters from ordinary members of the Catholic faithful have begun pouring into the Vatican, testifying to miracles that people believe they can attribute to the late Pope's intercession. Some of these reported miracles took place prior to the Pontiff's death. Even Cardinal Francesco Marchisano, the archpriest of the Vatican basilica, disclosed that on one occasion Pope John Paul heard that he was suffering from a throat ailment that prevented him from speaking aloud. The Pope prayed over him, touched the cardinal's throat, and reassured him that his power of speech would soon return—as indeed it did. Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragan, who headed the Pontifical Council for Health Care, offered a more remarkable story to the Italian press. The Mexican prelate revealed that in 1990, when he visited Zacatecas, the Pontiff embraced a 4-year-old boy named Heron Badillo, who was suffering in the terminal stages of leukemia. The boy soon recovered, completely and inexplicably, from his illness. Still, an official at the Secretariat of State cautions that such anecdotal reports will not be enough to ensure the Pope's beatification. The Church's procedures must be followed, he said; the Rome diocese must open a formal inquiry, in which Church officials will rigorously study the life of John Paul II to determine that he showed "heroic virtue" during his life. Once that is done, a new miracle must be approved—something that occurred after his death, and through his intercession—before his beatification can be

scheduled. Even in the case of a candidate with a worldwide reputation for sanctity and miraculous powers, the Church does not abandon that detailed inquiry, a Vatican official pointed out. “In the case of Padre Pio, for example, people spoke about the miracles accomplished during his lifetime, but in his cause, we only took one miracle into consideration,” says Msgr. Michele Di Ruberto, the undersecretary for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The Church, he explained, looks for evidence that the candidate for beatification has performed miraculous healings after his death, as testimony to the power of his intercession. The formal procedures now followed by the Vatican in appraising candidates for beatification and canonization are of relatively recent vintage. From the first days of Christianity through the Middle Ages, the only real requirement for the recognition of a saint was popular acclaim. A “saint” was simply someone widely recognized among the faithful as a model of holiness. With the passage of time, bishops recognized that popular devotions could sometimes be misleading. Gradually the hierarchy claimed the right to confer the title of sainthood, and by the 12th century, that right was given to the Pope alone. For centuries thereafter, the process leading to canonization was not strictly regulated. A candidate’s cause was argued by a “promoter,” while an official popularly known as “the devil’s advocate” was appointed to question every argument, in order to ensure that all doubts of the candidate’s sanctity were eliminated. Finally in 1917, under Pope Benedict XV, the formal rules for a cause were set down in detail. Those rules have occasionally been amended and simplified, most recently by Pope John Paul II himself in his apostolic constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister* in 1983. The first step in the process—after the mandatory 5-year wait—is to examine the candidate’s life, to find evidence of “heroic virtue.” Theologians then examine all of the candidate’s written works and any public speeches that have been preserved, to ensure that there is no sign of divergence from true Catholic doctrine. (In the case of Pope John Paul II, who produced a prodigious body of written work, and thousands of recorded talks, that phase could involve a lengthy research effort.) Finally, if those hurdles are cleared, a miracle must be approved—with testimony from both theologians and scientists witnessing to it. At that point, the candidate’s beatification can be scheduled. An additional approved miracle, taking place after the beatification, clears the way for final canonization. The next Pope, whoever he is, will have the authority to dispense with the 5-year waiting period, and accelerate the cause for John Paul’s canonization. That decision, Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls, is within the “exclusive competence” of the Roman Pontiff; the cardinals cannot dictate his choice. But there is little doubt that the leaders of the Roman Curia hope for a favorable decision. Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, the prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, put it neatly when he told the Italian weekly *Famiglia Cristiana* that “the coming Pope can decide, after evaluating the situation with prudence and wisdom, to dispense with the rules—as we hope with all our hearts.” Although most of the Popes of the early Church earned popular acclaim as saints, and many of them were martyrs, only a handful of Roman Pontiffs have been canonized since the official process first appeared in the Middle Ages, and only one—Pope Pius X—since the days of the Counter-Reformation. The formally canonized Popes are Sts. Leo IX (1049-1054), Gregory VII (1073-1085), Celestine V (1294-1296), Pius V (1566-1572), and Pius X (1903-1914). Several other Pontiffs have been beatified, again including one 20th-century Pope: Victor III (1086-1087), Urban II (1088-1099), Eugene III (1145-1153), Gregory X (1271-1272), Innocent V (1276-1276), Benedict XI (1303-1304), Urban V (1362-1370), Innocent XI (1676-1689), Pius IX (1846-1878), and John XXIII (1958-1963).



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