



Saint of the Week

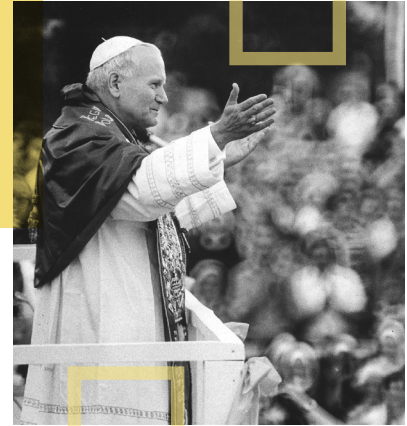
John Paul II

1920–2005

Feast Day—October 22

When this popular pope died, crowds in St. Peter's Square chanted "santo subito" ("sainthood now"). The Vatican heard, and the sainthood cause for the jet-setting pontiff who helped bring down European communism was put on the fast track; he was beatified in 2011. A strong admirer of St. Faustina and her dedication to Divine Mercy, John Paul II was canonized on Divine Mercy Sunday 2014 by Pope Francis. A Pole and former actor shaped by World War

II and the Cold War, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow (John Paul II) was the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. In his 26-year pontificate, he evangelized on trips to 129 countries, upheld traditional church doctrine against dissent, connected with the world's youth, established World Youth Day, and named more than 450 new saints. He also modeled Christian values by forgiving his would-be assassin and living an increasingly frail old age in public.



John Paul II established Divine Mercy Sunday as the Second Sunday of Easter for the Church in April 2000, though the feast had already been celebrated in Poland for many years. In that first Divine Mercy Sunday Mass, John Paul II said it was Jesus's love and mercy that must inspire us all of humanity:

“It is this love which must inspire humanity today, if it is to face the crisis of the meaning of life, the challenges of the most diverse needs and, especially, the duty to defend the dignity of every human person. Thus the message of divine mercy is also implicitly a message about the value of every human being. Each person is precious in God's eyes; Christ gave his life for each one; to everyone the Father gives his Spirit and offers intimacy.”