



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
AT THE WORLD PREVIEW OF THE FILM "JOHN PAUL II"***

Thursday, 17 November 2005

*Your Eminences,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to address my affectionate thoughts to you at the end of the world preview of the film on Pope John Paul II, made by "Lux Vide" and RAI [Italian Broadcasting Corporation] with the collaboration of other European television broadcasting corporations and CBS of the United States of America.

I thank the Director of RAI and the President of "Lux Vide", as well as those in charge of the other broadcasting corporations who have offered us the opportunity of today's impressive preview.

I extend my gratitude to the interpreters and to all who have collaborated in various ways to make this feature film, which pays tribute to the memory of my illustrious and beloved Predecessor. I also address a cordial greeting to those who have wished to take part this evening.

Today, in a media context, the work we have seen carries out an important service, combining the requirements of divulgation and the deepening of knowledge. Indeed, while it responds to a widespread demand of public opinion, the film offers a historical-biographical reconstruction that, despite the limitations of the means of communications, makes a contribution to offering people greater knowledge and awareness besides stimulating reflection and at times, profound questions.

The story opens with the attack on the Pope's life in St Peter's Square and, after a broad review of his years in Poland, continues with his long Pontificate. It reminded me of what John Paul II wrote

in his Testament concerning the attack on his life on 13 May 1981:

"Divine Providence miraculously saved me from death. He himself who is the One Lord of life and death extended this life of mine, and in a certain way he restored it to me. Ever since that moment it has belonged even more to him" (*Testament of Pope John Paul II*, 17 March 2000, n. 2; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 13 April 2005, p. 5).

Seeing this film has renewed in me, and I think in all who had the privilege of knowing him, a feeling of profound gratitude to God for having given to the Church and to the world a Pope with such a lofty human and spiritual stature.

Over and above any particular evaluation, however, I consider this film to be a further attestation, the umpteenth, of the love that people, all of us, feel for Pope Wojty³a and their great desire to remember him, to see him again, to feel him close. Over and above the more superficial and emotional aspects of this phenomenon, there is certainly an intimate spiritual dimension that we here in the Vatican note every day, as we see the swarm of pilgrims who come to pray or even only to pay their respects briefly at his tomb in the Vatican Grottoes.

That emotional and spiritual bond with John Paul II, which became very strong in the days of his agony and his death, has not been cut short.

It has never ended, because it forms a bond between souls: between the great soul of the Pope and the souls of innumerable believers; between his fatherly heart and the hearts of countless men and women of good will who recognized him as the friend and champion of humankind, of truth, justice, freedom and peace. In every part of the world, a multitude of people have admired him above all as a consistent and generous witness of God.

With these sentiments, I express my very best wishes for the successful telecasting of the film, and cordially impart the Apostolic Blessing to each one of you present here and to your loved ones.

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