

Pursued by Love

**Rediscovering the Universal Call to Holiness
and the Beauty of Vocations in the Church**

Come, Holy Spirit!



Plan for Today

- A New (Renewed) Vision
- Reproposing the Call to Holiness
- Beauty that Complements: Faces of Vocations

Jesus, we need You!

- We need Your mercy and grace.
- We need Your (and Our) Father.
- We need the promise of Your Father, the Holy Spirit.
- We need Your mother (and ours), Mary, and Your Church.
- Help us surrender.



Jesus, how magnificent
and utterly astounding is
Your love

and we are nothing without You



Jesus, how can it be that
You pursue us?



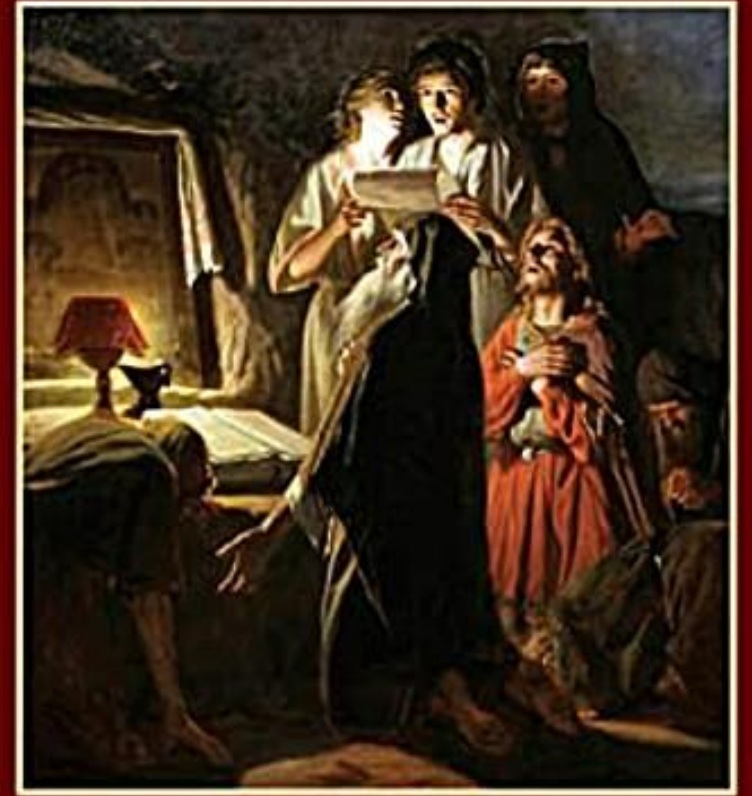
**A New Vision –
Give Us Eyes to See**

A story: A priest sees anew...



For such a time as this...

- Conversion of the mind to a new way of seeing
- “Do not be conformed to this world [or age] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...” (Rom 12:2)
- Seeing anew, through the lens of the Gospel, the *kerygma*



*From Christendom
to Apostolic Mission*

Pastoral Strategies for an Apostolic Age

UNIVERSITY OF MARY

For such a time as this...

- The call for revival: A call for God to act
- A call to see anew and ***to restore the initiative to God***



An example from the past: Fr. Émile Mersch, SJ



An example from the past: Fr. Émile Mersch, SJ

- *Seeing anew: Church as the Mystical Body of Christ*
- *Unity in the midst of diversity*
- *The Good News and the mystery of the Church are inseparable*

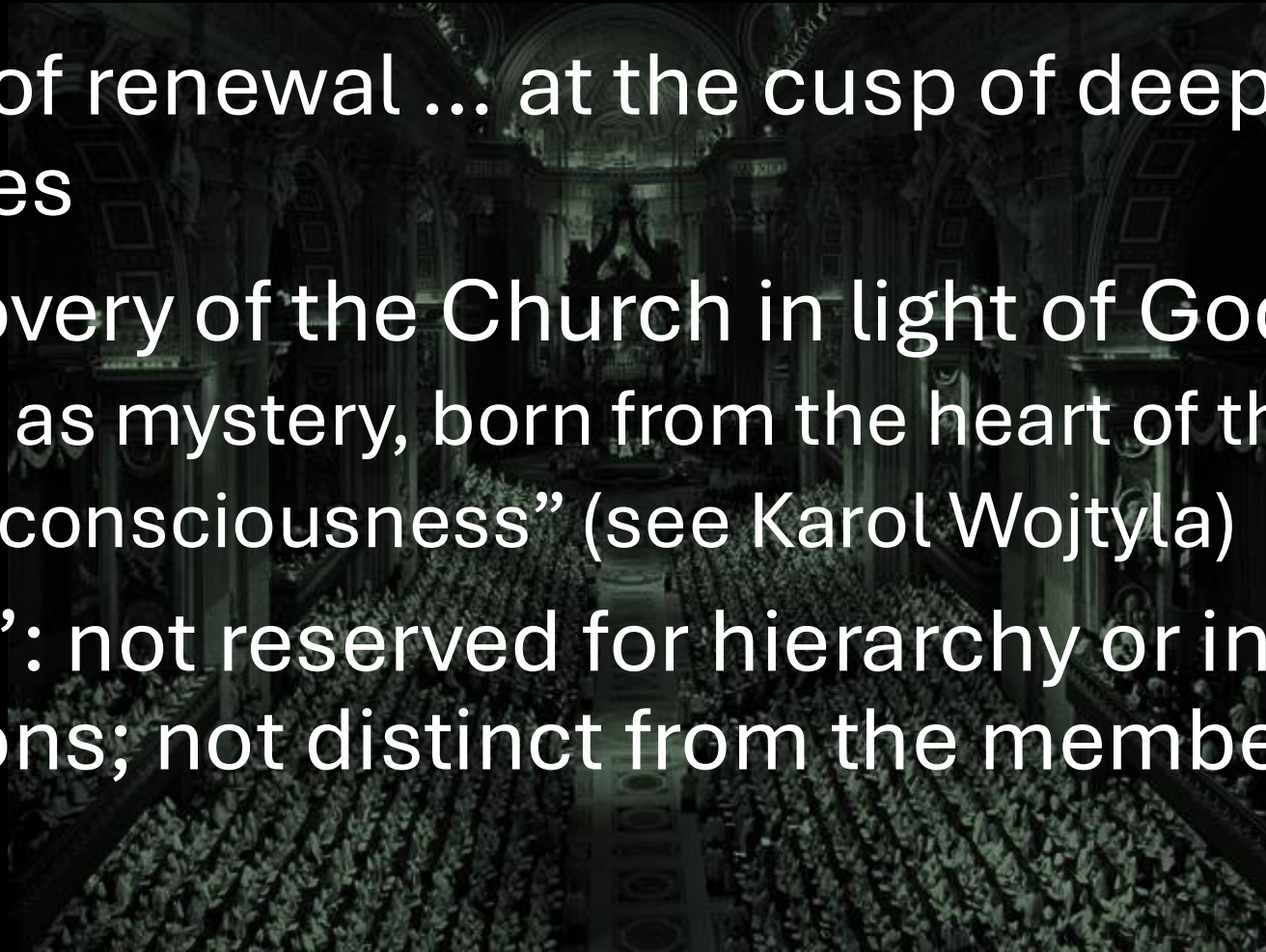


The Prophetic Vision of the Second Vatican Council



The Prophetic Vision of the Second Vatican Council

- The fruit of renewal ... at the cusp of deeper challenges
- A rediscovery of the Church in light of God's plan
 - Church as mystery, born from the heart of the Trinity
 - A new “consciousness” (see Karol Wojtyła)
- “Church”: not reserved for hierarchy or institutional dimensions; not distinct from the members



A Council of Vocation and Mission

Lumen gentium: **The universal call to holiness**

- *All the Christian faithful, whatever their condition (status) or rank (ordinis), are called to the fullness of the Christian life and the perfection of Christian charity (no. 40).*
- *[A]ll the faithful of Christ are invited and bound to strive towards holiness and the perfection of their particular state of life (no. 42).*

A Council of Vocation and Mission

Gaudium et spes: **The supreme calling**

- *[O]nly in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light.... Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. (GS, no. 22)*

A Council of Vocation and Mission

Gaudium et spes: **The supreme calling**

- *All have been called to one and the same end, God himself. (no. 24)*
- *[M]an, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself. (no. 24)*

A Council of Vocation and Mission

- Documents on Bishops, Priests, Religious, Laity
- *Apostolicam actuositatem* : To the laity – go and transform the world ... live sent.
- *Ad gentes*: *The pilgrim Church is of its very nature missionary, since she draws her origin from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the plan of God the Father.* (no. 2)

A Council of Vocation and Mission

- *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: **Full, conscious, active participation**
- *Presbyterorum ordinis*: “The Lord Jesus, ‘whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world,’ gave his whole mystical body a share in the anointing of the Spirit with which he was anointed.” (no. 2)

- *Awaken, O Church!*
Come alive!

Conversion of St. Paul

Saul, Saul,
why are you
persecuting
Me?



Our mystical incorporation into Christ

- Second Vatican Council, an extended exegesis on St. Paul and the Church as the (Mystical) Body of Christ
 - 1 Cor 12:4-7, 12-31; Ephesians

Our mystical incorporation into Christ

- Priest, Prophet, King
- Communion and Mission – inseparable calls
- Enlivened by the Holy Spirit

Each member, each vocation, is needed

- There are no observers in the bleachers
- “Vocation” pertains to all the baptized
- Each of us is called because we are loved, and the love of God urges us on, wherever we are called

Vocations interrelated and interdependent

- People of God: the whole Church
- The hierarchy serves the mission of the laity (and that of the life of the counsels)
- The laity, particularly the domestic Church, is the seedbed of vocations in the Church
- Consecrated life gives specific expression to the evangelical counsels, guiding both hierarchy and laity to greater love


Harmonious collaboration brings life, growth,
and beauty to the Body of Christ

- Analogy of the Body
- Work of the Holy Spirit
 - Co-essentiality of institutional and charismatic
- Evident in the history and life of the Church

A Prophetic Vision

- Pinpointing areas in clear need of emphasis
- Aspects in need of realization
- *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission...*

Reproposing the Call to Holiness Today

A photograph of a high school building at dusk. The building has a modern design with a long, low profile and a series of large, multi-paned windows on the right side. To the left, there is a section with vertical slats. A tall, white bell tower with several bells is visible in the background. The sky is dark, and the building's lights are on, creating a warm glow. The text is overlaid in white, sans-serif font.

Story:
A teenage boy likes a girl and
goes on a high school retreat...

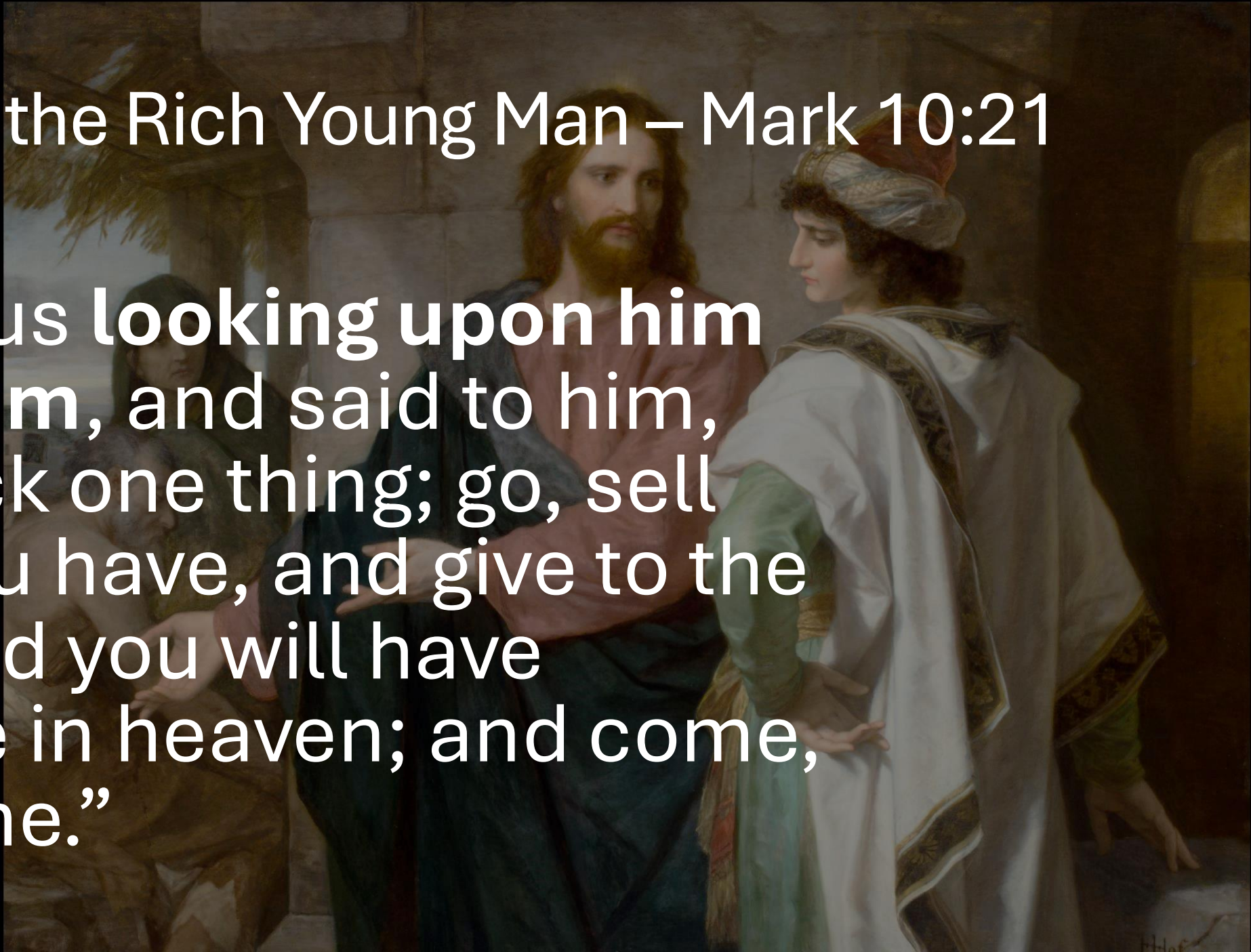


Jesus' Calling of the Twelve – Mark 3:13-15

And he went up on the mountain, and called to him ***those whom he desired***; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

Jesus and the Rich Young Man – Mark 10:21

And Jesus **looking upon him loved him**, and said to him, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”



Lord, why do You call us?

- To be with You
- To be sent



Loved, Called, Sent

- “Vocation is the revelation of God’s choice.”
(Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, 140)
- “It is only in contemplating the love of the Son that man comes to understand his own calling: to perceive and understand himself from no other standpoint than that of mission.” (Balthasar, *ibid.*, 79-80)

Loved, Called, Sent

- *Not that we loved God but that he loved us... (1 Jn 4:10)*
- *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. (Jn 15:9)*
- *Love one another as I have loved you. (Jn 15:12)*

Three basic senses of “vocation”

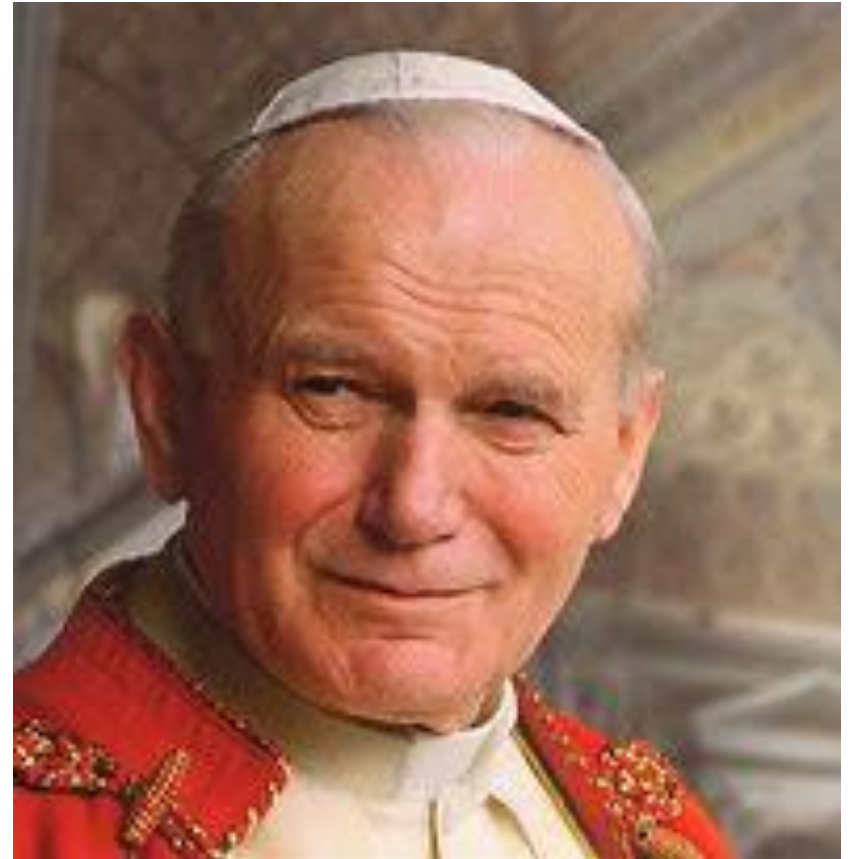
- Baptismal call to holiness
- States of life
- Particular, daily life

At the root of every vocation ...

- Holiness – love
 - Deep friendship with the Lord
 - The call to pure and chaste love
 - The call to evangelize - mission

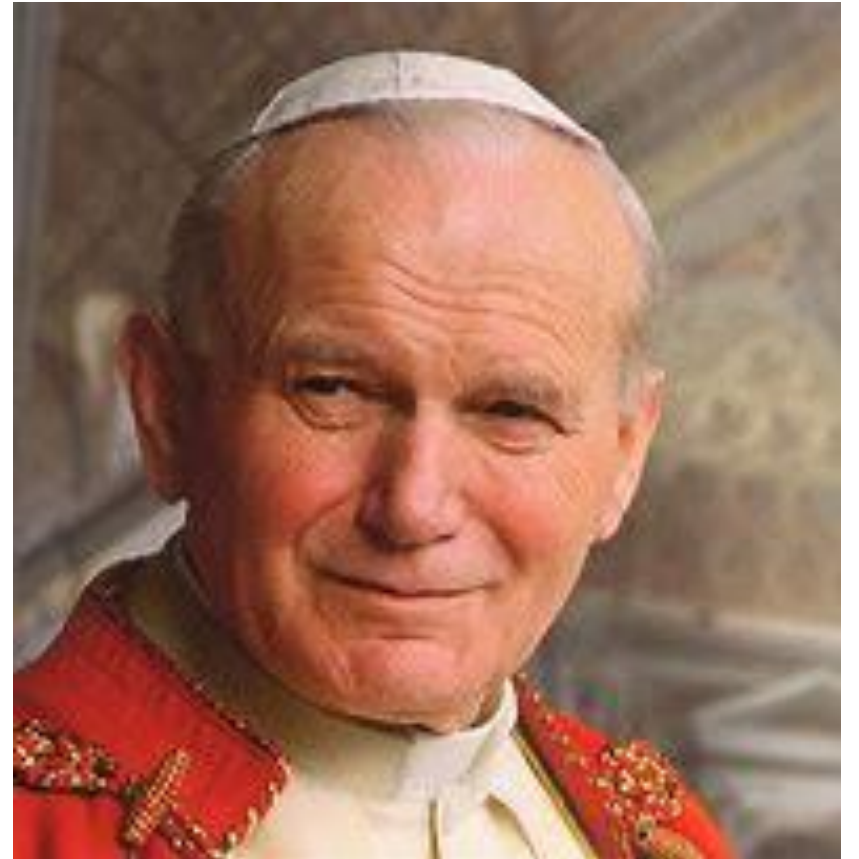
St. John Paul II – *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 30

- First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to *holiness*.



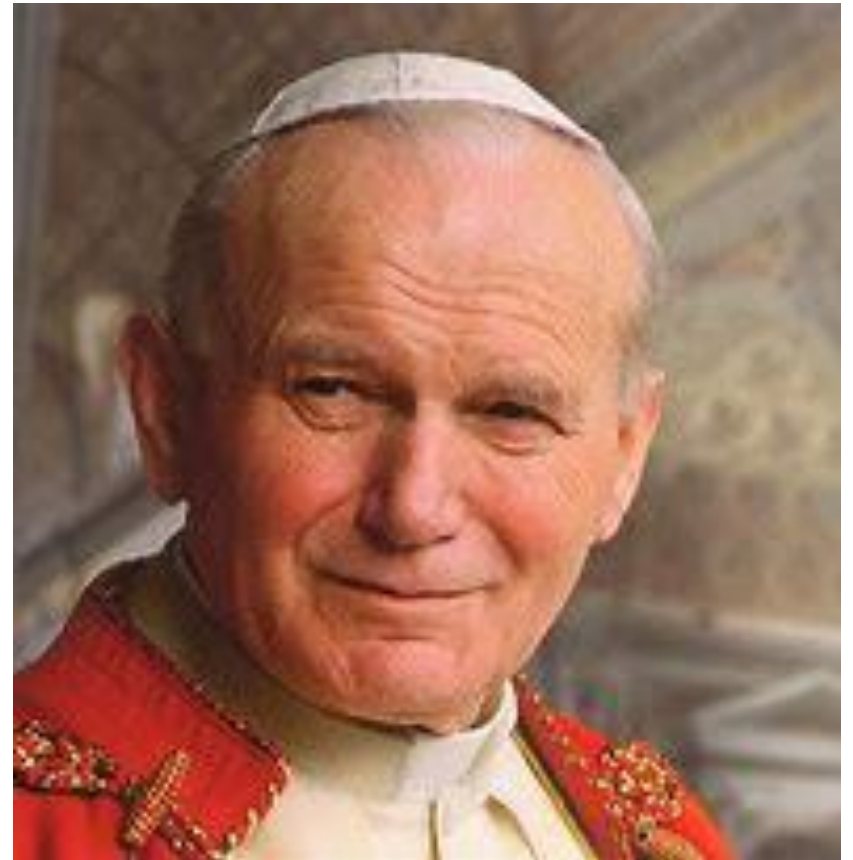
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- The Council Fathers laid such stress on this point, not just to embellish ecclesiology with a kind of spiritual veneer, but to make the call to holiness an intrinsic and essential aspect of their teaching on the Church.



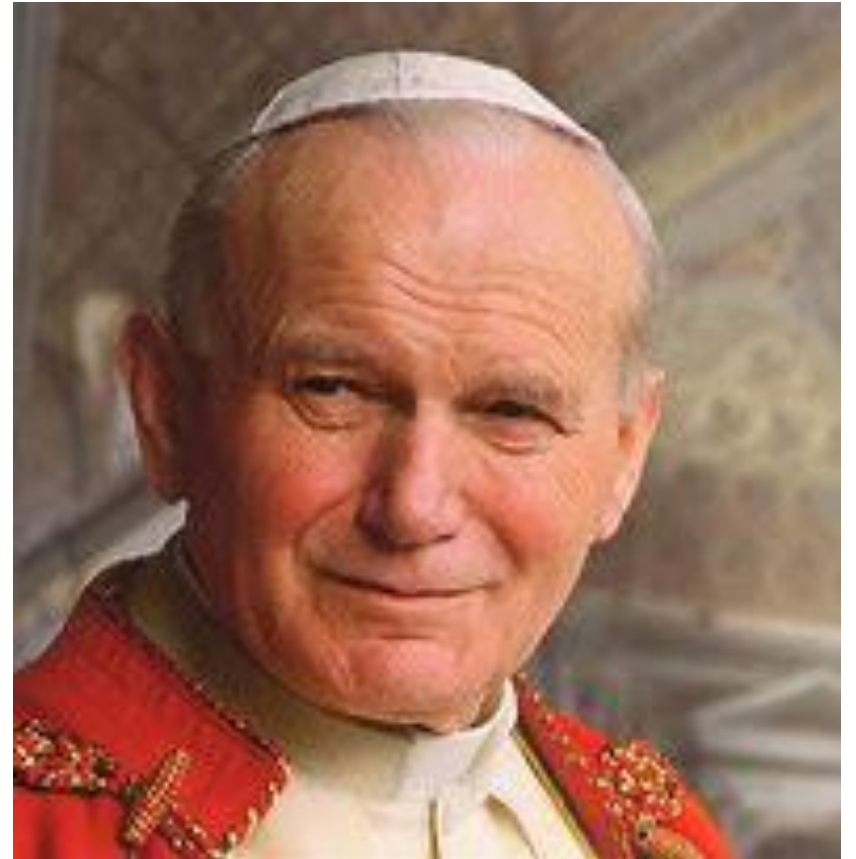
St. John Paul II – *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 31

- In fact, to place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences. It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity.



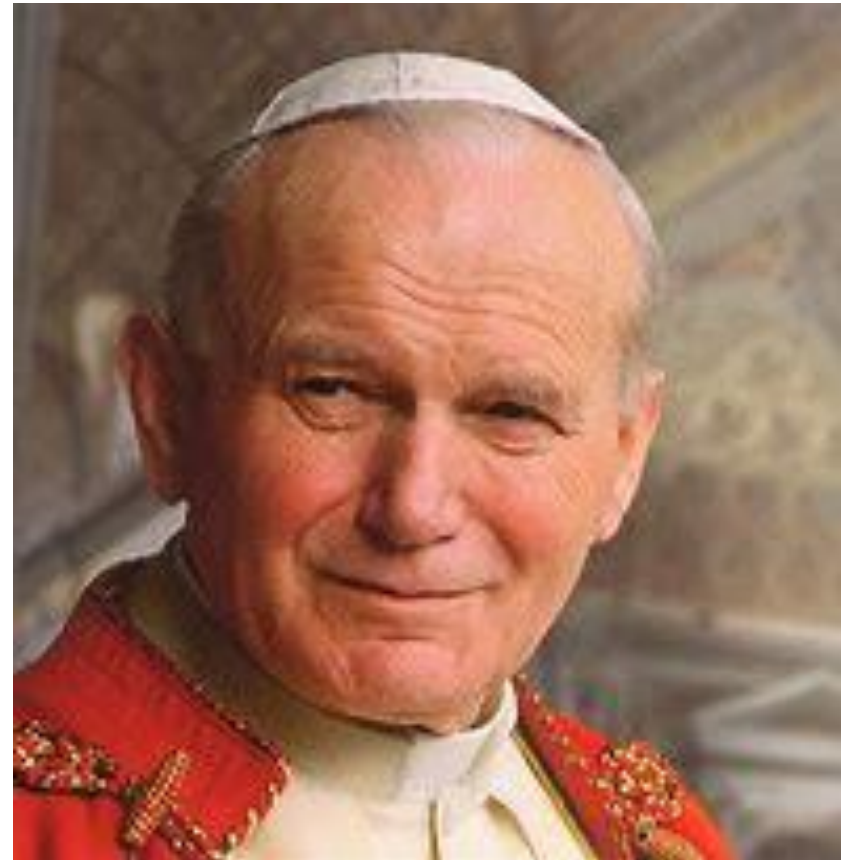
St. John Paul II – *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 31

- The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this *high standard of ordinary Christian living*: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction.



St. John Paul II – *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 31

- It is also clear however that the paths to holiness are personal and call for a genuine *"training in holiness"*, adapted to people's needs.





Pope Francis – *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 1

- The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.



Pope Francis – *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 1

- The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible. We see it expressed in the Lord's words to Abraham: "Walk before me, and be blameless" (*Gen 17:1*).



Pope Francis – *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 1

- My modest goal is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities.



Pope Francis – *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 1

- For the Lord has chosen each one of us “to be holy and blameless before him in love” (*Eph* 1:4).

Reproposing the call to holiness

- Seeing anew (conversion)
- Restoring the initiative to God
(exercising the primacy of grace)
- Looking to the Cross

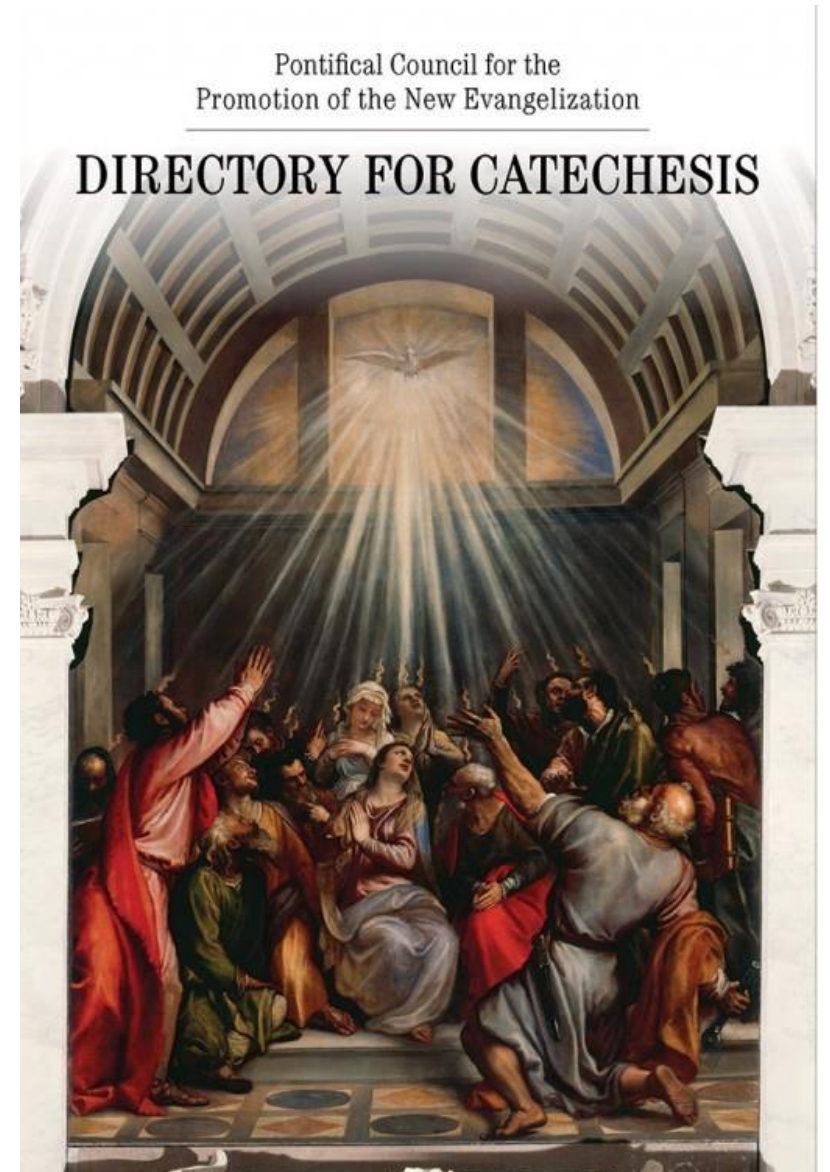
Reproposing the call to holiness

- **Seeing anew (conversion)**
 - Mission-oriented: Evangelization
 - Kerygma – the proclamation of the Gospel

Evangelization

There is a pressing need to frame everything in terms of evangelization, as the fundamental principle that guides ecclesial activity as a whole.

(DC, no. 297)



“...the single most urgent evangelistic task: a compelling proclamation of the gospel...”



The Power of the Gospel, the *kerygma*

Created

Captured

Rescued

Response

Reproposing the call to holiness

- **Restoring the initiative to God**
(exercising the primacy of grace)
 - Prayer and surrender to the Holy Spirit
 - Gifts, charisms, and discernment



On Discernment

- How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil? The only way is through discernment, which calls for something more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift which we must implore. If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant us this gift, and then seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely we will grow in this spiritual endowment. (GE, no. 166)



An Urgent Need

- The gift of discernment has become all the more necessary today, since contemporary life offers immense possibilities for action and distraction, and the world presents all of them as valid and good. All of us, but especially the young, are immersed in a culture of zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend. (GE, no. 167)

Reproposing the call to holiness

- **Looking to the Cross**

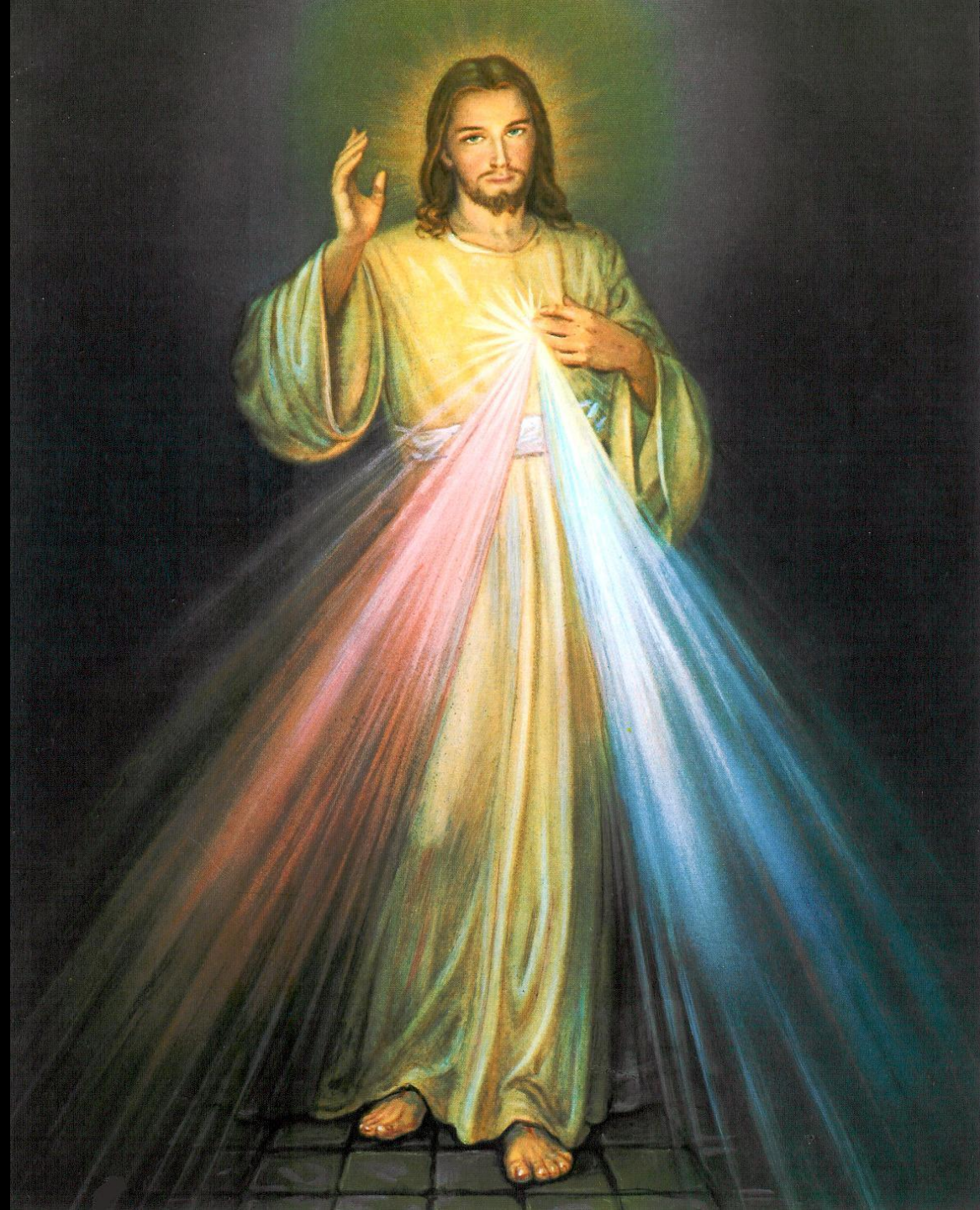
- E.g., John Paul II & WYD
- Pope Francis: The logic of the Cross



“Deny yourself, pick
up your cross, and
follow Me.”



Mercy and Healing –
*By His wounds we
are healed*



**Beauty that
Complements:
Faces of Vocation(s)**

The Harmony of Difference in Unity

- Complementary calls, gifts, charisms
- Coessentiality of the institutional/ hierarchical and charismatic dimensions or gifts
- Life in the Holy Spirit
- Love allows and calls forth great freedom



St. John the Baptist

- Turning the hearts of fathers to their children
- A friend of the Bridegroom, who is Jesus
- Martyred in defense of the truth and sanctity of marriage





Sts. Priscilla and Aquila

- Married couple, co-workers with St. Paul
- Domestic church in service to the proclamation of the Gospel and the apostolic and priestly ministry
- Risked their lives for St. Paul's



St. Catherine of Siena

- Third-Order Dominican, helped restore the papacy to Rome
- Worked for reform and against the western schism
- “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”

The Georgia Martyrs, Venerables

- Five Spanish Franciscan friars, serving Native Americans along present-day coastal Georgia (La Florida), martyred in 1597 for standing for the truth of marriage and against polygamy
 - Pedro de Corpa
 - Blas Rodríguez
 - Miguel de Añon
 - Antonio de Badajoz
 - Francisco de Veráscola



Sts. Zélie and Louis Martin

- Parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and Servant of God Léonie (Sister Françoise-Thérèse)





St. Thérèse of Lisieux

- Patroness of missions
- Spirituality of the “little way,” one of the most influential spiritual masters of the 20th-21st centuries
- For clergy, consecrated/religious, lay (young or old, married or single)

Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton

- Followed the Lord's call, even in the face of great obstacles
- As a priest, he was open to serving all, in the face of persistent prejudice and racism
- "It was said that I would be the only priest of my race in America and would not likely succeed."



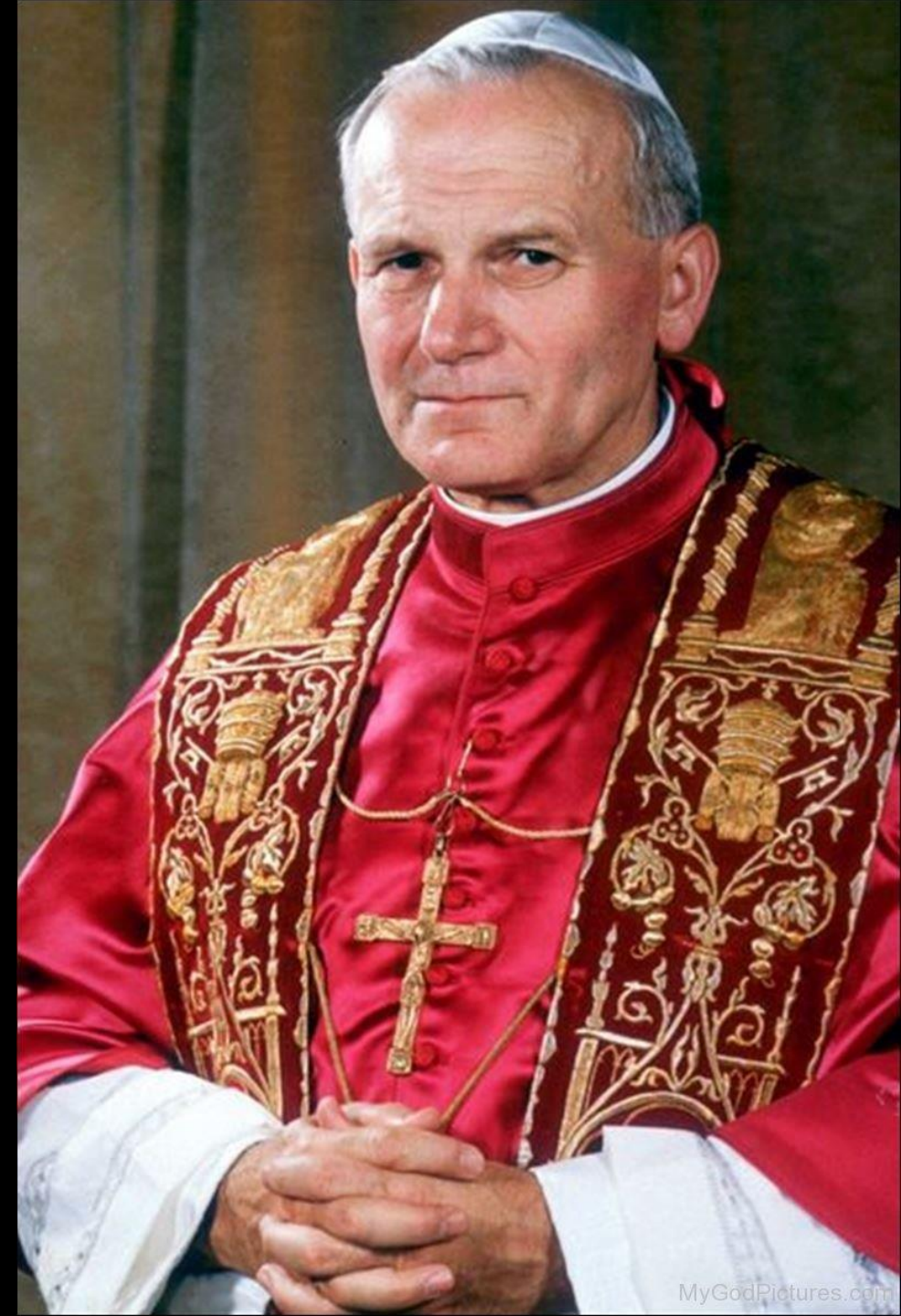


St. José Luis Sánchez del Río

- A young, courageous lay witness in the Cristero War, when the Mexican government was executing priests, closing schools and convents, and taking church properties
- Tortured and martyred for the faith in 1928, at the age of 14

Pope St. John Paul II

- An advocate of holiness for many
 - Marriages and families
 - Young people
 - Women
 - Brother priests
 - Religious sisters and brothers
- Bequeathed a vision of the human person and the call to love that has only begun to be unpacked





Every face in this room...

- The Lord has called us and is calling us now
- *Come, Holy Spirit, set our minds and hearts on fire with Your love. Set the Church ablaze in and through Your work in us. Come, Holy Spirit, come!*