

Message on the Anniversary of the Death of Pope Saint John Paul II

April 2, 2026

Today Melania and I join with Catholics and freedom-loving people around the world in honoring the immortal legacy of His Holiness Pope Saint John Paul II, a man of profound faith, a lion of liberty, and one of the fiercest defenders of human dignity to ever live.

As a young man during the barbaric Nazi occupation of Poland, the future saint formed an unbreakable conscience grounded in holiness, virtue, and moral courage. Later as a priest, a bishop, and the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, he worked tirelessly as a witness to hope in proclaiming the timeless truths of the Christian faith to all the nations of the Earth.

In the face of atheistic socialism, religious persecution, anti-Semitism, and other threats to human dignity and freedom, Pope John Paul II sparked a moral and spiritual revolution that led to the defeat of Soviet communism and the liberation of the captive nations of Europe. He transformed relations between the Christian and Jewish communities, expressing the Catholic Church's profound and enduring solidarity with the Jewish people. And he boldly reaffirmed Western civilization's Christian identity and religious foundations, stirring countless hearts toward the good, the true, and the beautiful.

In 1979, just 8 months after ascending to the papacy, Pope John Paul II triumphantly returned to his homeland of Poland, then under communist rule, and proclaimed in his first sermon that no government has the right to separate the people from God. As he said during his legendary sermon, "Man is incapable of understanding himself fully without Christ. He cannot understand who he is, nor what his true dignity is, nor what his vocation is, nor what his final end is. He cannot understand any of this without Christ." In response, the people sang "We Want God."

Today, our Nation is similarly yearning for God, not in response to a tyrannical government, but to a culture that has been hollowed out for far too long. I applaud the millions of young Americans leading this great reawakening in faith and know that Pope Saint John Paul II's witness will continue to inspire millions more to find God once again.

As we remember Pope John Paul II's towering life and legacy—especially during this 250th year of American independence—we are reminded that, in order to be a great nation, we must never abandon our faith in God, love of country, and devotion to liberty. During this Holy Week and throughout the Easter season, I encourage every American to keep the memory of Pope Saint John Paul II alive for generations to come.

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