



The Holy See

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT JOHN PAUL II'S BIRTH

[Multimedia]

Dear young people,

This year we celebrate 100 years since the birth of [Saint John Paul II](#). It is a beautiful occasion for me to address you, young people of Krakow, thinking about how much he loved young people, and remembering [my presence among you for WYD in 2016](#).

Saint John Paul II was an extraordinary gift of God to the Church and to Poland, your motherland. His earthly pilgrimage, which began on 18 May 1920 in Wadowice and ended 15 years ago in Rome, was marked by his passion for life and by a fascination with the mystery of God, of the world and of humankind.

I remember him as a great man of mercy: I am thinking of the Encyclical [Dives in Misericordia](#), of the [canonisation of Saint Faustina](#) and of the [institution of Divine Mercy Sunday](#). In the light of God's merciful love, he captured the specificity and beauty of the vocation of women and men, he understood the needs of children, of young people and of adults, also considering cultural and social conditioning. Everyone was able to experience him. You too, today can experience him, know about his life and his teachings, which are available to everyone also thanks to the internet.

Each and every one of you, dear boys and girls, bears the imprint of your own family, with its joys and sorrows. Love and care for the family is a characteristic feature of [John Paul II](#). His teachings are a secure point of reference to find concrete solutions to difficulties and to the challenges that families must face in our times (cf. *Message to the Congress "John Paul II, the Pope of the family"*, Rome, 30 October 2019).

But personal and family problems are not an obstacle on the road to holiness and happiness. Nor were they for young Karol Wojtyła, who — as a lad — suffered the loss of his mother, brother and father. As a student he experienced the atrocities of Nazism, that took so many of his friends from him. After the war, as a priest and bishop, he had to face Atheistic Communism.

Difficulties, even tough ones, are a test of maturity and of faith; a test that can only be overcome by relying on the power of Christ, who died and rose again. John Paul II reminded the whole Church of this in his first Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, where it says, “The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly ... must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self” (n. 10).

Dear young people, this is what I hope for each and every one of you: to enter Christ with your whole life. And I hope that the celebrations of the centenary of the birth of Saint John Paul II will inspire within you the desire to walk courageously with Jesus, who is “the Lord of risk, he is the Lord of the eternal ‘more’... As he did on Pentecost, the Lord wants to work one of the greatest miracles we can experience; he wants to turn your hands, my hands, our hands into signs of reconciliation, of communion, of creation. He wants your hands — boys and girls he wants *your* hands — to continue building the world of today” (Address at the Prayer Vigil on the occasion of World Youth Day, Krakow, 30 July 2016).

I entrust you all to the intercession of Saint John Paul II and I bless you, wholeheartedly. And you, please, do not forget to pray for me.

Thank you!