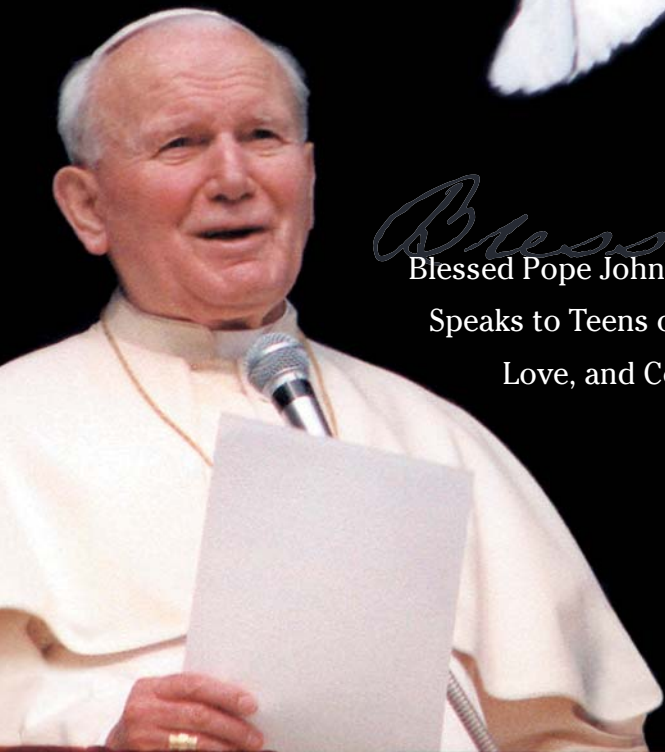


Commemorative Edition *Blessed* Pope John Paul II

*my dear young  
friends*



*Blessed*  
Blessed Pope John Paul II

Speaks to Teens on Life,  
Love, and Courage

saint mary's press

# Foreword

Foreword to

*My Dear Young Friends*

*Blessed Pope John Paul II Edition*

# *inseparable*

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Today, 1 May 2011, is a day that has been greatly anticipated. Today will be forever etched in the great history of the Church. Today the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, bestows upon a man who loved the young people of the world as deeply as he loved God, beatification Blessed Pope John Paul II.

Blessed Pope John Paul II is your special friend in heaven. He would have loved you as much as he loved all the young people of the world that he met during the twenty-six years of his papacy. He would have believed in you. He would have called you to follow Christ without fear, just as he called the millions of young people who gathered with him at every World Youth Day and at special gatherings throughout his papacy.

*friend!*

Now, residing among the saints and angels in heaven, he continues to be your advocate before God the Father and receives your prayers of intercession. Do not be afraid to pray to Christ, who Blessed Pope John Paul II taught us, is our “inseparable friend.” Your prayers will be heard.

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Blessed Pope John Paul II was fifty-eight years old when elected Pope of the Church. He was eighty-four years old when he died, while Pope, on April 2, 2005. He passed away at 9:37 in the evening in his private apartment at the Vatican, in Rome.

His body finally succumbed to the Parkinson's disease that left him voiceless in his final days. Yet on Easter Sunday, just a few days before his death, he insisted on going to the window overlooking Saint Peter's Square and blessing the tens of thousands of believers who had gathered, in part to celebrate Easter Sunday and in part to hold vigil for the Holy Father's imminent death.

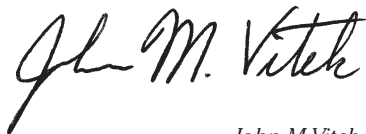
Reverent silence fell upon the enormous crowds gathered in Saint Peter's Square at the announcement of the Holy Father's passing. A single bell of Saint Peter's Basilica tolled. Only moments later the crowd began to applaud, a tradition in Italy to acclaim the greatness of a life lived in service of God. Then the shouts began to ring out: "Santo Subito," meaning "make him a saint immediately."

At the funeral Mass, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, referred to the Holy Father as John Paul II the Great, acknowledging the cries of the Church to recognize the extraordinary faith of this servant of God.

So, today, the Church has moved one step closer in placing John Paul II the Great among the canon of saints. Today, the Church welcomes Blessed Pope John Paul II and awaits the day of his canonization.

Through the intercession of Blessed Pope John Paul II, may the words of this little book, the words of Blessed Pope John Paul II, lead you to a greater, deeper love of Christ and your neighbor.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Vitek". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J" and "M".

*John M. Vitek*  
*President, Saint Mary's Press*  
*14 January 2011*





*my dear young  
friends*



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Blessed Pope John Paul II  
Speaks to Teens on Life,  
Love, and Courage

**John Vitek, Editor**



saint mary's press

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The acknowledgments continue on page 121.

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*thanks*

Thank you to the young people across the United States who helped select the quotes for this book, especially Venessa, Amy, Jenn, Emily, Denise, Vanessa, Dana, Josh, Michael, Fred, Matt, and the many others whose names I don't know.



# preface

Pope John Paul II first addressed the youth of the world in his apostolic letter *Dilecti Amici*, in 1985. Since then he has addressed youth nearly every year for World Youth Day. Every other year young people from all over the world pilgrimage to a different place of the globe in response to the Holy Father's invitation to attend World Youth Day. This amazing day is a celebration and sharing of faith in Jesus Christ.

The quotes used throughout this book are the actual words of the Holy Father. They have been taken directly from his addresses to young people made during his pastoral visits to various countries around the world. Other quotes come from his prepared remarks, which were meant to prepare young people for annual World Youth Day pilgrimages. Young people from across the United States selected the quotes in this book because they found them to be particularly challenging and inspiring.



Throughout this book you will see citations following each of the pope's quotes, such as "Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day XV." The following list of sources helps explain the citations you will come across in your reading.

***Dilecti Amici.*** Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter on the occasion of the International Youth Year, 31 March 1985

**Israel-Palestine.** Message of the Holy Father to the young people of Israel and Palestine, 22 September 1999

**Poznan, Poland.** Address of the Holy Father at the youth meeting in Poznan, Poland, on the occasion of the pastoral visit to Poland, 3 June 1997

**Saint Louis, Missouri.** Message of the Holy Father to the young people at the Kiel Center, Saint Louis, Missouri, 26 January 1999

**Santiago, Spain.** Message of the Holy Father to youth meeting in Santiago de Compostela, 8 August 1999

**World Youth Day VI.** Message of the Holy Father for the 6th World Youth Day, 15 August 1990

**World Youth Day VII.** Message of the Holy Father for the 7th World Youth Day, 24 November 1991

**World Youth Day VIII.** Message of the Holy Father for the 8th World Youth Day, 15 August 1992

**World Youth Day XI.** Message of the Holy Father  
for the 11th World Youth Day, 26 November 1995

**World Youth Day XII.** Message of the Holy Father  
for the 12th World Youth Day, 15 August 1996

**World Youth Day XIV.** Message of the Holy Father  
for the 14th World Youth Day, 6 January 1999

**World Youth Day XV.** Message of the Holy Father  
for the 15th World Youth Day, 15 August 2000

**World Youth Day XVI.** Message of the Holy Father  
for the 16th World Youth Day, 14 February 2001

# introduce

“ I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”

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—John 15:15

Pope John Paul II has a deep affection and love for young people. Undoubtedly, you—young people throughout the world—hold a special place in Pope John Paul II’s heart. He has an extraordinary interest in you. Moreover, he believes in you—in your hunger for God and in your desire to do good things in the world.

You, perhaps like no other generation, are growing up in a world of rapid and constant change. Yet, in this world of change, you can find in Pope John Paul II’s words an unwavering constancy. His message is a lasting message of love and encouragement. He will both affirm your goodness and challenge you to greater things.

# tion

The Holy Father's desire for you—for all young people around the world—is clear: Draw close to Christ so that you may participate, with the whole community of believers, in the great task of transforming the world according to God's design, of creating a world where the love of God directs all things!

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John Paul II believes in you as a young person. He is convinced that in Christ you have the ability to make this world a better place. Through your friendships, your family, your work, your school, and your athletic, artistic, and intellectual talents, you can spread the Good News of God's love in ways that only a young person can.

This is why each time that John Paul II addresses young people he calls out in a special, heartfelt way, "My dear young friends!" His is a friendship with you that is rooted in the Good News of Christ's love. In addressing the youth of Poland in June 1997, John Paul II said: "Dear young people, follow Christ with the enthusiasm of your youthful hearts. He alone can calm

[your] fear. Look to Jesus from the depths of your hearts and minds! He is your inseparable friend.” This message is just as meaningful to you today as it was to the Polish teens in 1997.

*My Dear Young Friends* provides you with fifty-two weekly reflections on the Holy Father’s words. You will find a quote from the Holy Father for each week of the year. These are the words he would say to you if you were to meet him face-to-face. They are powerful words. They are words that affirm you, challenge you, and call you to a deep and profound love for Christ through his church.

### **Think About That**

Each quote is followed by a section titled “Think About That.” When you come to this section, pause to think about what the Holy Father has to say to you. Imagine that he is speaking these words directly to you. What do his words mean to you? What is he teaching you?

### **Take Action**

Following each “Think About That” section, you will find a challenge to “Take Action.” These actions are important to carry out. Why? They’re important because the Christian life is one of both word and deed. What good does it do to

be inspired by the words of our Holy Father but not to integrate them into the way you live your life? The actions do not take a lot of time, but they will help to change your life.

### Say a Prayer

The Holy Father also wishes that you pray over matters of faith and life. Each week's reflection provides a prayer. Use this prayer each day of the week to keep the words of the Holy Father fresh in your mind and heart.

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Finally, the "Did you know?" section offers you some trivia about the pope's life and ministry. This information will help you come to know the pope in a more practical and personal way.

May the words of our Holy Father inspire you and enliven in your heart a burning fire for the Good News of Jesus Christ!



*John M. Vitek*

*President, Saint Mary's Press*

I will not be afraid.

—Hebrews 13:6

*were*

“ Do not be afraid of Christ! Trust him completely! He alone ‘has the words of eternal life.’ Christ never lets us down!”

—Pope John Paul II, Poznan, Poland

### **Think About That**

The Holy Father reminds us, “Christ never lets us down!” Never! Sometimes it’s hard to believe that, because we all have had the experience of friends who have let us down. But Christ will not. How would our lives be different if we trusted Christ completely? How would we act if we never feared being let down by him?



### **Take Action**

In our friendships, we have surely let others down. Can you think of a time recently when you have let down your mother or your father? Maybe you have let down your friends? Go to them sometime this week and tell them that you are sorry for letting them down. Tell them that you are going to work hard at not letting them down in the future.

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### **Say a Prayer**

Lord, I want to trust you completely. I am so glad that you will never let me down. If I follow your ways, I know that I will have eternal life with you. Thank you.

**Did you know?** Pope John Paul II was elected pope in 1978 at the age of fifty-eight. He is the 264<sup>th</sup> pope in the history of the Roman Catholic church.



The integrity of the upright guides them.

—Proverbs 11:3

*were*

16 “ But—I ask you—is it better to be resigned to a life without ideals . . . or rather, . . . to seek the truth, goodness, justice, working for a world that reflects the beauty of God, even at the cost of facing the trials it may involve?”

—Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day XII

### **Think About That**

To live in a world where we experience Christian ideals like kindness, patience, peace, forgiveness, and joy takes people who first believe in those ideals and then commit to



acting out those ideals every day. That's no easy task. The Holy Father is asking us, "Is it worth it?" He says, "Yes!"

### Take Action

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Every day, in many ways, we fail to live out our Christian ideals. Each time we fail, we cause a little "death," or pain and sorrow, in someone and in ourselves. This week, choose one Christian ideal that you are going to work hard to live out in every situation and with every person that you meet.

### Say a Prayer

Lord, help me to live out the ideals of Jesus. Help me especially when others make fun of me or tease me for standing up for what I believe in. Help me to know that it's worth the work.

**Did you know?** The pope has numerous official titles, including bishop of Rome, vicar of Jesus Christ, successor of the prince of the Apostles, supreme pontiff of the universal church, patriarch of the West, primate of Italy, archbishop and metropolitan of the Roman province, sovereign of the state of the Vatican City, servant of the servants of God.

Remember the poor.

—Galatians 2:10

*were*

“ Jesus invites us to love the poor,  
because they should be given  
special attention precisely because  
of their vulnerability.”

—Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day XIV

### **Think About That**

The poor are vulnerable because they don't have access to things they need in order to live a full life. Some don't have access to health care, enough food, or a place to live. Some