

*Franciscan Sisters, Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother*



From the Desk of  
Sr. Katherine Caldwell, TOR  
Reverend Mother

June 2011

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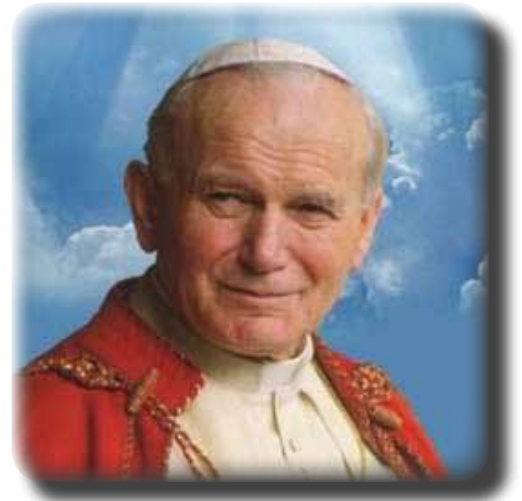
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## *A Man of Sorrows: A Ray of Hope*

Dear Family and Friends:

I am writing to celebrate the life and holiness of Blessed John Paul II who, for many of us, became our spiritual father and guide through difficult times. Several months ago while I was present at the welcoming dinner for one of our vocation discernment retreats, we were asked to share about one of our favorite saints. When this simple request was spoken, I felt a surge of grace run through me and a burning desire to share about Pope John Paul. This experience took me by surprise because in the past I had always shared about Francis, Catherine or Therese, but without a thought, a stream of love and gratitude flowed from my heart for our beloved John Paul.

I realized that John Paul had become my spiritual father and was instrumental not only in my own life, but in the forming of our community. After Scripture and the writings of St. Francis, St. Clare and St. Bonaventure, John Paul was the most often quoted person in our Constitutions (the guiding documents of our community). John Paul's theology of religious life and spirituality of communion were easily interwoven as vibrant threads into the tapestry of our Franciscan spirituality and love for the Church in our times.



Yet, far more than John Paul's words has been the witness of his life: He has shown me how to live our community's charisms of crucified love and mercy in our times. He became a man of sorrows, who no matter how much he suffered, never lost hope nor spiraled down to the pits of bitterness or resentment, but, rather, in everything he endured he was able to unite himself with Mother Mary in a profound 'yes' to God, so that in every tragedy, loss or illness he became more conformed to Christ and united to the suffering Body of Christ, the Church. John Paul not only spoke and wrote about making a sincere gift of self—he totally lived it by pouring out his life for the Church—not in some abstract concept, but for each of us personally. How was it possible that in a crowd of millions, I, along with many others, could feel John Paul's personal love and care? John Paul reminds us that no hurt, tragedy, sorrow or illness is too great for Christ to transform into healing, forgiveness, and compassion, and that when we unite ourselves with Christ in a sincere gift of self we share in the joy of bringing new life to others.

While John Paul suffered much in this life, the focus was never on the suffering, but always on the new life we have in Christ. He was a ray of hope for our times. Not even the darkness of death could quench the light of Christ within him. I still remember when John Paul died. Although I felt a deep loss, as if a great light for our times had been taken away, I did not experience darkness; rather, I sensed a spiritual communion with John Paul and an invitation to become more fully the light that God has created and called me to be.

This experience was renewed within me and shared by many of our sisters. On Easter morning, as is our custom, some sisters and I were praising God in song while the sun was rising. The unique reality of this Easter was that it was a dark, dreary and

cloudy morning. Rather than being disappointed that we could not see the sun rising behind the dark clouds, we experienced it as a special grace of faith, for we knew the sun was rising—that Christ was present—even though we could not see it. We felt a renewed sense of our charism of intercession, to be with Mary at the foot of the cross, mindful of the many people whose life circumstances of sorrow, suffering and trials have clouded their vision of God and of knowing His merciful love. We felt John Paul's presence and sensed that we were carrying on the grace given him to intercede for the world and to be a ray of hope in the midst of this world's darkness.



This experience captures the role of saints and blessed in our lives. The Church declares a person a saint not so that he/she can be admired, but so that God is glorified and so that we can be inspired and empowered by his/her example. With this in mind we celebrate the beatification of Blessed John Paul II on Divine Mercy Sunday 2011, in the month of Mary and on May 1, the day devoted to St. Joseph the Worker. May the graces of this holy day of John Paul's beatification flow upon us so that we may more fully rely upon God's mercy to transform us, draw upon Mary's intercession to help us, and like St. Joseph and John Paul, allow God's grace to empower us to become poured out in love and mercy for others.

Relying on His Merciful Love,

*Sr. Katherine Caldwell, TOR*

## *Benefactor Prayer*

*(prayed everyday for our benefactors)*



*Father of Mercy,  
we thank you for your faithfulness,  
and for the ways you provide for us  
through our benefactors  
and those who support our way of life.  
By means of our life of prayer, penance,  
and works of mercy,  
may your love and mercy flow from here  
to touch many souls and bring them healing  
and salvation.*

*United with the heart of our Mother Mary,  
we ask this through Jesus Christ,  
Our Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
one God forever and ever. Amen.*

## **Begging Box**

- † New Desktop Computers (2)
- † Color Printers
- † Gas Gift Cards for BP or Marathon
- † Handheld Vacuum Cleaners
- † VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR:
  - Grounds
  - Maintenance
  - Answering phones & office assistant
  - Helping to make Religious Articles

## **SAVE THE DATES**

### **Days of Recollection**

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 22**

Bl. John Paul II Feast Day  
Blessing of the Divine Mercy  
Wood Relief



**SATURDAY DECEMBER 3**

# "Rome Super Trip" Beatification of John Paul II

When Rome announced the date for the beatification of John Paul II, Franciscan University's Austrian campus creatively adjusted the academic schedule and offered a "Rome Super Trip". On a rainy April 30th, 116 very "pumped" students, staff, faculty and families boarded 2 buses at 3:30 p.m. bound for Rome.

As we wound our way through the picturesque countryside of Austria, a rainbow appeared next to us and seemed to be traveling alongside of us, its 2 ends gliding along the grass at the same speed as the bus. This phenomenon added to the excitement of the adventure we were on. One way we prepared for the day ahead was to watch the movie: Karol: the Man, the Pope (the second part of a biography on the life of JP II (Karol Wojtyla.) The movie ended with his funeral in St. Peter's Square and here we were, 6 years later, on our way back to the same place for the next event involving this holy man: his beatification. As with all pilgrimages, we had a trial sent our way. A few hours into our trip, as night fell, one of the buses blew a gas line and was spewing gasoline all over the highway. The stop to remedy this cost us 2 hours.

After driving all night, the buses arrived in Rome 14 hours after departure, dropping us off at 6 a.m. We grabbed what we needed for the day, and started our walk toward the Vatican. We just followed the crowd. The police were everywhere along the main roads and in front of all the barricaded side streets leading to St. Peter's. There was only one way to go and so we did... across the Tiber, down a couple blocks, and back across the Tiber on the angel bridge leading toward St. Peters. Most of us made it in the vicinity of St. Peters. My goal was to find a mega screen on the Via della Concilazione and to be able to see the dome. When I reached that spot I stopped, content to be on the edge of the 1.5 million people smashed together like sardines in a can. Many of our students managed to wiggle their way down the main street and get much closer.



Sr. Carrie Ann, Sr. Mary Markita and Sr. Monica wait in line with a student to venerate Bl. John Paul II remains

As we waited for the Mass to begin, surrounded mostly by Poles and Italians, we finished our 54-day rosary novena through the intercession of JP II that we'd begun while in Rome on Ash

Wednesday. Surprisingly, time flew during our long stand.

Just taking it all in and being present to the moment made me forget about time. I was aware that it was Divine Mercy Sunday, but as people were pushing and shoving all around us, I was having a hard time feeling mercy. It was a child who lifted my spirits by reaching his little hand out to the people he was passing while riding atop a man's shoulders. After reaching out my hand to shake his, joy flooded my heart and the crowds no longer irritated me. In fact, the people surrounding us were such a blessing. One man in particular was heaven-sent. He interpreted the biography for us, shielded us from the sun with his umbrella, and gave us his radio to listen to the English translation of the homily. The Red Cross people were very busy attending those feeling faint or collapsing by carrying them out on stretchers. After the Mass, some people were handing out small bags of cold baby carrots and apple slices to the pilgrims from the back of a truck. Mercy was definitely evident in many of JP II's spiritual children throughout the day.

After the proclamation of "Blessed John Paul II", it was a memorable moment to be in the crowd surrounded by cheers, tears, and banners waving wildly. What really amazed me was the hush that fell over that same crowd during the Mass when the pope asked for a moment of silence to pray through the new Blessed's intercession.

Depending on one's position in the crowd, some got to receive communion while others were out of reach. Some of our number were able to receive in random churches afterwards. A few stood in line for a couple more hours in order to pass by the coffin in St. Peters. Others were happy to be shopping, refreshing themselves, and mingling with other pilgrims in the less congested areas. No matter how the remaining few hours after the Mass were spent, all of us were so grateful for having been present at this significant event in church history: the Beatification of John Paul II on the 1st day of May (the month of Mary, his #1 patroness) on Divine Mercy Sunday (the universal church feast which he instituted). It was with happy contentment that we re-boarded the buses that evening for another all night bus ride home. It was a very memorable "Super Trip" to Rome!

Sr. Joan Paule & Sr. Carrie Ann on their way to St. Peter's





# Franciscan Sisters, T.O.R.

of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother  
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## *Celebrating* *Bl. John Paul II*



*To make known God's Merciful Love*



*Your prayers and  
intentions are being  
remembered...*

*...with love in  
Father of Mercy  
Chapel*

*Dear Family and Friends:*

*Words cannot express the depth of gratitude in our hearts for all the ways you have shown your love and support for us and for our mission to make known God's merciful love. Please know that you are remembered everyday in our prayers (see inside) and in a personal way when you send in prayer requests or make a donation. As we approach the great solemnity of Pentecost, we want to assure you of our prayers for a greater outpouring of the Spirit upon you and your loved ones. We will offer up a Holy Hour and Mercy Chaplet for each you on this day.*

*Sr. Katherine Goldwell, TOR*