



Saint John Paul II (1978-2005)



His Holiness John Paul II (16 Oct. 1978-2 April 2005) was the first Slav and the first non-Italian Pope since Hadrian VI. Karol Wojtyła was born on 18 May 1920 at Wadowice, an industrial town south-west of Krakow, Poland. His father was a retired army lieutenant, to whom he became especially close since his mother died when he was still a small boy. Joining the local primary school at seven, he went at eleven to the state high school, where he proved both an outstanding pupil and a fine sportsman, keen on football, swimming, and canoeing (he was later to take up skiing); he also loved poetry, and showed a particular flair for acting. In 1938 he moved with his father to Krakow where he entered the Jagiellonian University to study Polish language and literature; as a student he was prominent in amateur dramatics, and was admired for his poems. When the Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, the university was forcibly closed down, although an underground network of studies was maintained (as well as an underground theatrical club which he and a friend organised). Thus he continued to study incognito, and also to write poetry. In winter 1940 he was given a labourer's job in a limestone quarry at Zakrów, outside Krakow, and in 1941 was transferred to the water-purification department of the Solway factory in Borek Falecki; these experiences were to inspire some of the more memorable of his later poems. In 1942, after his father's death and after recovering from two near-fatal accidents, he felt the call to the priesthood, began studying theology clandestinely and after the liberation of Poland by the Russian forces in January 1945 was able to rejoin the Jagiellonian University openly. Graduating with distinction in theology in August 1946, he was ordained priest by Cardinal Adam Sapieha, Archbishop of Krakow, on 1 November of the same year. In March 1946 his first collection of poems, *Song of the Hidden God*, was published. Sent by Cardinal Sapieha to the Pontifical University (the Angelicum) in Rome, he obtained his doctorate in June 1948 for a dissertation on the concept of faith in St. John of the Cross. After serving from 1948 to 1951 as a parish priest (at Niegowice, and then at St. Florian's, Krakow), he returned to the Jagiellonian to study philosophy (Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, and above all Max Scheler, on whom he published his thesis in 1960). During these years (1952-8) he also lectured on social ethics at Krakow seminary, and in 1956 was appointed Professor of Ethics at Lublin University, becoming acknowledged as one of Poland's foremost ethical thinkers.

On 4 July 1958, while on a canoeing holiday with students, he was appointed titular Bishop of Ombi and auxiliary to the see of Krakow by Pius XII. On 30 December 1963 Paul VI named him Archbishop of Krakow, a role in which he revealed himself as a politically wise and forceful adversary of the repressive Communist government, and on 26 June 1967 made him a Cardinal. He had already published *Love and Responsibility* (1960), a pastoral treatise on the responsibilities of love, including the field of sexuality (1960), and at Vatican Council II (1962-65) he became a prominent figure internationally. A member of the Preparatory Commission, he attended all four sessions and made an influential contribution to the debate on religious freedom, contending that the Church should grant to others the liberty of thought, action, and speech that she claimed for herself. After the Council he was active in implementing its decisions, in Rome as well as in Poland, and attended four of the five general episcopal synods it established; at the 1971 synod he was elected a member of its steering committee. He was also a member of several of the Vatican congregations, or ministries. In the 1960s and 1970s he was becoming

a familiar figure on the world stage, repeatedly visiting North America (e.g., attending the Eucharistic congress at Philadelphia in 1976), and travelling to the Middle East, Africa, South and East Asia, and Australia. In Poland he cooperated with his primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, in a struggle, which was broadly successful, to secure from the regime some kind of tolerable legal status for the Church. In 1976, at the invitation of Paul VI (who had read his *Love and Responsibility* (1960) and used it in drafting *Humanae Vitae*), he delivered the traditional course of Lenten addresses to the Pope and the papal household (published in English in 1976 as *Sign of Contradiction*). He was thus a well-known and widely respected personality when, at the conclave of October 1978, the Cardinals elected him Pope at the relatively youthful age of fifty-eight. Before being elected to the papacy, he had published, as Karol Wojtyła, a number of other works in the field of thought, poetry and theatre, including: *In Front of the Jeweller's Shop* (1960), *The Acting Person* (1969), *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* (1972), *Brother of Our Lord* (1979), *Collected Poems* (1982), and *The Collected Plays and Writings on Theater* (transl. B. Taborski, 1987).

As with John Paul I, whose name he adopted, there was no coronation: the inauguration of his ministry as 'universal pastor of the Church' took place in St. Peter's Square on 21 October 1978 and his speech was famous for the phrase: 'do not be afraid'. Addressing the Cardinals on 17 October, the new Pope pledged himself 'to promote, with prudent but encouraging action', the fulfilment of Vatican Council II. On 18 October he told the ambassadors that, as he saw it, his role was to be 'the witness of a universal love'; politically the Holy See sought nothing for itself but only that believers might be allowed true freedom of worship. His first Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (Mar. 1979), set out his consistent teaching on human dignity and social justice, and also established the Christological character of his pontificate with his statement that Christ illuminates man for man. His second Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia* (Dec. 1980), developed related themes, calling on men to show mercy to one another in an increasingly threatened world. On 13 May 1981, while being driven in a jeep in St. Peter's Square, he was shot and seriously wounded by a young Turk, Mehmet Ali Ağca, underwent major surgery, and was convalescent until October 1981. He subsequently visited his would-be assassin in prison and extended his Christian forgiveness to him. In his third Encyclical, *Laborem Exercens* (Sept. 1981), which he revised while recovering, he commemorated the anniversary of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* and called for a new economic order, neither capitalist nor Marxist but based on the rights of workers and the dignity of labour. Others followed: *Slavorum Apostoli* (June 1985), in commemoration of the eleventh centenary of the evangelising work of St. Cyril and St. Methodius, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the world (May 1986); *Redemptoris Mater* (Mar. 1987) on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the pilgrim Church, in preparation for the Marian year; a work which continued his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary previously expressed in the motto adopted for his episcopal coat of arms: '*Totus tuus*'; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (Dec. 1987), expressing concern for the social and international crisis (a work that greatly impressed Mikhail Gorbachev); *Redemptoris Missio* (Dec. 1990) on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate; *Centesimus Annus* (May Day 1991), denouncing both Marxism, then moving towards eclipse, and consumerist capitalism; *Veritatis Splendor* (Oct. 1993), on certain fundamental questions of the Church's moral teaching and arguing that freedom of conscience cannot be absolute since certain things are inherently evil; *Evangelium Vitae* (Mar. 1995), on the value and inviolability of human life; and *Ut Unum Sint* (May 1995), on commitment to ecumenism. *Fides et Ratio* (15 Oct. 1998), perhaps his most important Encyclical, stressed the distinction between religious awareness and human rationality, but at the same time drew attention to their mutual 'circularity' and 'complementarity'. This interest in the role of philosophy and thought was a natural outcome of his academic and intellectual background which stressed the existence of two orders of knowledge which are distinct but not separate – faith and philosophical knowledge. In this Encyclical he also held up the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas as a leading pathway for the mission of achieving philosophy consonant with faith. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), John Paul II's last Encyclical, deals with the relationship between the Eucharist and the Church and is a sort of spiritual last will and testament in which all of his spirituality is condensed.

These fourteen Encyclicals were accompanied by important Apostolic Letters dealing with a broad range of issues, such as: *Egregiae Virtutis* (1981), in which John Paul II proclaimed St. Cyril and St. Methodius, together with St. Benedict, the Patrons of Europe; *Caritatis Christi* (1982), addressed to the Church in China; *Salvifici Doloris* (Feb. 1984), on the Christian meaning of human suffering; *Redemptionis Anno* (Apr. 1984), on the City of Jerusalem, the sacred patrimony of all believers and the crossroads of peace for the peoples of the Middle East; *Les Grands Mystères* (May 1984), on the problem of the Lebanon; *Dilecti Amici* (Mar. 1985), to the youth of the world on the occasion of the United Nations' International Youth Year; *Euntes in Mundum Universum* (Jan. 1988), for the millennium of the baptism of Kievan Rus; *Mulieris Dignitatem* (Sept. 1988), on the dignity and vocation of women on the occasion of the Marian Year; *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (May 1994), to the bishops on reserving priestly ordination to men; *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (Nov. 1994), one of the most important, which called for a new launching of the message of peace and the forgiveness for past errors to achieve a purification of memory, together with an end to the tradition of silence in relation to such errors: 'the Church feels it her

duty to recognise the errors of her own members and to ask forgiveness of God and her brothers'; *Laetamur Magnopere* (Aug. 1997), for the approval and promulgation of the official Latin version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; *Divini Amoris Scientia* (Oct. 1997), proclaiming St. Theresa of the Child Jesus a Doctor of the Universal Church; *Spes Aedificandi* (Oct. 1999), proclaiming St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Co-Patronesses of Europe; *Motu Proprio Misericordia Dei* on certain aspects of the celebration of the sacrament of penance (May 2002); and *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* on the Most Holy Rosary (Oct. 2002). In addition, John Paul II engaged in the new and more personal form of communication of letters to specific groups in which he offers his participation in their human condition: to families (Feb. 1994), to children (Dec. 1994), to women (June 1995; it may be observed that in the same year Mary Ann Glendon was appointed by John Paul II as the first woman to head a Holy See delegation, in this case to address the fourth UN Conference on women, held in Beijing); to artists (Apr. 1999), and to the elderly (Oct. 1999). Reference should also be made to the five less 'official' books published by John Paul II during his pontificate: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (Oct. 1994), *Gift and Mystery – on the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination* (Nov. 1996), *The Poetry of Pope John Paul II Roman Triptych Meditations* (March 2003), *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way* (May 2004) and *Memory and Identity* (Feb. 2005).

Reaching out to a world in need of a new proclaiming of God and of Christ, another characteristic and highly successful method of the new evangelisation promoted by John Paul II was carefully organised apostolic journeys and pilgrimages by air – an initiative favoured by his command of many languages (including those of Central and Eastern Europe). His first was in January 1979 to open the Latin-American episcopal conference at Puebla, Mexico; his second, from 2 to 10 June 1979, was an epoch-making return to Poland. Since then each year of his pontificate was highlighted by such journeys, which emphasised the global mission of the papacy: to Ireland, the UN, and the United States of America (29 Sep.-8 Oct. 1979); Turkey on 28-30 November 1979, when he and the Ecumenical Patriarch attended each other's liturgies; Fatima, Portugal, in May 1982, to thank the Blessed Virgin Mary for deliverance from assassination; Britain (the first visit ever paid to it by a Pope), Rio de Janeiro, and Buenos Aires to call for peace in relation to the war between Argentina and Great Britain over the Falkland Islands/Malvinas; and Geneva (all in June 1982); Spain (Nov. 1982), for the closing of the fourth centenary of the death of St. Teresa of Avila; Lisbon, and Central America (Mar. 1983); Korea, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Thailand (May 1984); Switzerland (June 1984); Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago (Jan. 1985); Holland (May 1985); India (Jan. 1986); Colombia, and St. Lucia (July 1986); France (Oct. 1986); Bangladesh, Singapore, the Fiji Islands, New Zealand, Australia, and the Seychelles (Nov. 1986); Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina for the celebration in Buenos Aires of the Second World Youth Day (Apr. 1987); the U.S.A. and Canada (Sept. 1987); Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru (May 1988); Austria (June 1988); Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland (Sept. 1988); Norway, Iceland, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden (June 1989); Santiago de Compostela (Spain) for the Fourth World Youth Day, and Asturias (Aug. 1989); Korea, Indonesia, and Mauritius (Oct. 1989); Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad (Jan. 1990); Czechoslovakia (April 1990); Mexico, Curacao, and Malta (May 1990); Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and Yamoussoukro (Sept. 1990); Portugal, Czestochowa in Poland for the Sixth World Youth Day, and Hungary (1991); Brazil (Oct. 1991); Senegal, Gambia, and Guinea (Feb. 1992); to Santo Domingo (Oct. 1992) for the fifth centenary of the evangelisation of Latin America; Albania (Apr. 1993) and Spain (June 1993); Jamaica, Merida, and Denver for the Eighth World Youth Day (Aug. 1993); Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (Sept. 1993); Croatia (Sept. 1994); Manila (Jan. 1995) for the Tenth World Youth Day, Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea), Sydney (Australia) and Colombo (Sri Lanka); and Belgium (June 1995); Slovakia (June 1995); Yaoundé (Cameroon), Johannesburg/Pretoria (S. Africa), and Nairobi (Kenya) for the closing of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops (Sept. 1995); Tunisia (April 1996); Hungary, and France (Sept. 1996); Sarajevo (Apr. 1997); Beirut for the closing of the Special Assembly for Lebanon of the Synod of Bishops (May 1997); Paris for the Twelfth World Youth Day (Aug. 1997); Cuba (Jan. 1998); Nigeria (Mar. 1998); Croatia (Oct. 1998); Romania (May 1999); Slovenia (Sept. 1999); New Delhi for the closing of the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops, and Georgia (Nov. 1999); Mount Sinai (Feb. 2000); the Holy Land (Mar. 2000); Fatima (May 2000); the Jubilee Pilgrimage in Greece, Syria and Malta in the footsteps of St. Paul the Apostle (May 2001); the Ukraine (June 2001); Kazakhstan, and Armenia to celebrate the anniversary of 1700 years of Christianity in that country (Sept. 2001); Azerbaijan and Bulgaria (May 2002); Canada and Guatemala (July 2002); Mexico and Poland (Aug. 2002) where he attracted crowds that went into the millions; Spain, Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Slovakia (2003); Bern (2004) and Lourdes (2005). Such journeys have been accompanied by a very large number of visits to different parts of Italy (over 160). At the same time, John Paul II, from the beginning of his pontificate, always devoted much attention to his local duties as Bishop of Rome, visiting 317 of the 334 parishes as well as institutions within the confines of the Eternal City.

In harmony with the ideas and aspirations which were to be expressed in the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, John Paul II was been very active since the beginning of his pontificate in promoting the ecumenical spirit and developing closer ties with the other Christian Churches and the other religions of the world. Following a visit

to Rome's main synagogue in April 1986, he attended the First World Day of Prayer for Peace on 27 October 1986, a meeting of world religious leaders in Assisi. This important event subsequently became an annual occasion for prayers for peace and religious understanding in harmony with the spirit of St. Francis. On 24 January 2002, after the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, in response to an invitation by John Paul II, representatives of the religions of the world gathered in the name of peace in Assisi to affirm that true religion is in favour of 'justice and peace, forgiveness and life, love!' and against violence and terrorism. Since the first Assisi meeting, John Paul II received a large number of religious leaders, encounters which have been followed by the issuing of joint statements: His Holiness Dimitrios, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Dec. 1987); the Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion, Dr. Robert Runcie (Sept. 1989); the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartolomeo I (June 1995); the Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion, Dr. George Leonard Carey (Dec. 1996); the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I (Dec. 1996); Aram I Keshishian, Catholicos of Cilicia of the Armenians (Jan. 1997); His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians (Nov. 2000); and His Beatitude Teoctist, Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Romania. In addition, on 31 October 1999 the Catholic Church and the World Lutheran Federation signed a 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of the Justification' in Augsburg, Germany. In 2001 John Paul II visited a mosque in Syria during his pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Paul.

During his almost twenty-seven years as Pope, John Paul II held 9 consistories and appointed 231 Cardinals, including Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini (2 Feb. 1983), who later became a Member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

John Paul II also granted 1166 audiences, and received a large number of world leaders and Heads of State, including: H.M. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip (1980; 2000), Antonio R. Eanes (1980), Jimmy Carter (1980), Elio Toaff (1981; 1994), Yasser Arafat (1982; 1996; 1998; 2000; 2001), Sandro Pertini (1982; 1984), Ronald Reagan (1982; 1987), Shimon Peres (1985), Andrey Gromiko (1979; 1985), Francesco Cossiga (1985), Amin Gemayel (1986), Kurt Waldheim (1987), Wojciech Jaruzelski (1987), Raúl Alfonsín (1987), Corazon C. Aquino (1988), George Bush (1989, 2001), Patrick J. Hillery (1989), Mikhail S. Gorbachev (1989; 2002), Mario Soares (1990), Lech Walesa (1991), King Karl Gustaf XVI of Sweden and Queen Silvia (1991), Oscar L. Scalfaro (1992; 1998), Milan Kucan (1993), Giuliano Amato (1993), Carlos S. Menem (1993), Richard von Weizsacker (1994), Vaclav Havel (1994), Bill Clinton (1994), Yitzhak Rabin (1994), Thomas Klestil (1994), Jacques Chirac (1996), Romano Prodi (1996), Fidel Castro (1996), Benjamin Netanyahu (1997), Eduard Shevardnadze (1997), Madeleine Albright (1998), King Albert II and Queen Paola of the Belgians (1998), Nelson Mandela (1998), Ariel Sharon (1999), Carlo A. Ciampi (1999), Vladimir Putin (2000), George W. Bush (2001), Silvio Berlusconi (2002) and Ayad Allawi (2004).

Such activity was accompanied by the establishment of new diplomatic relations with a number of States: the United States of America (Jan. 1984), Poland (July 1989), the Soviet Union (Mar. 1990), Albania (Sept. 1991), Croatia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine (Feb. 1992), Mexico (Sept. 1992); Israel (June 1994); Jordan (Mar. 1994); South Africa (Mar. 1994); and Libya (Mar. 1997). Furthermore, John Paul II has been forthright in his calls for peace at moments of major international crisis. Thus he played a major role in the signing of the treaty on borders between Argentina and Chile in 1984, and was firm in urging the achievement of peace at the time of the Falklands/Malvinas (May 1982), Gulf (Aug. 1990), and Afghanistan (Sept. 2001) wars. History must also record his notable contribution to the demise of the Communist empire in Central and Eastern Europe: the rapturous reaction of the people during his first visit to Poland in 1979 not only exposed the bankruptcy of Communist authority but also had a knock-on effect in other parts of the Soviet regime. Of great historical significance is also the fact that John Paul II was the first Pope to visit both the Polish Parliament (June 1999) and the Italian Parliament (Palazzo Montecitorio, Nov. 2002), where, surveying the history of the Italian people, he underlined their constant commitment towards peace, justice and solidarity. In October 2002, the Holy Father received the 'honorary citizenship' of the City of Rome. Thanking the Mayor, John Paul II said: 'The Bishop of Rome feels honoured to be able to repeat today, with particular significance, the Apostle Paul's words, *'Civis romanus sum'* (cf. *At 22, 27*).

Aware of the holiness of the Catholic Church and of the need for her constant renewal, and eager to stress her spiritual universality, one of the other characteristics of the pontificate of John Paul II was the large number of canonisations (457 by late Oct. 2002) and of beatifications (1282 by late Oct. 2002) of men and women from various parts of the world and different periods of history: Fr. Maximilian Kolbe (Oct. 1982); St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face, Doctor of the Church (Oct. 1997); Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, martyr (Oct. 1998); Maria Faustyna Kowalska, virgin of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy (Apr. 2000); Luis Batis Sáinz (May 2000); Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (June 2002); and Josémaría Escrivá de Balaguer, the founder of Opus Dei (Oct. 2002); and to the beatification of: Giuseppina Bakhita of Sudan (June 1991); Columba Marmion, Benedictine Abbot (Sept. 2000); Pope Pius IX and Pope John XXIII (Sept.

2000); and Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi and Maria Corsini, widow of Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi, the first time that a husband and wife were beatified (Oct. 2001) and Mother Teresa of Calcutta (2003).

Another significant aspect of the papacy of John Paul II, and an element which reflected his keenly-felt wish for direct communication and contact with people, was the strong emphasis he placed on meeting private individuals almost every day at holy masses in his private chapel in the Vatican. Equally, he laid stress on the importance of working lunches and dinners in his private apartments. These new channels of communication served in particular as an instrument to enable the Pope to enter into direct contact with individual Christians, reflecting thereby his vision of the human person and his centrality. This wish for direct communication (joined with a profound concern for the future) was reflected in another significant theme of his pontificate: John Paul II constantly sought close contact with, and devoted great attention to, young people, whom he repeatedly held up as the hope of the Church and mankind. John Paul II attended many of the United Nations' World Youth Days, and at the fifteenth such meeting, held in the Jubilee Year at the campus of Tor Vergata University in Rome, more than two million young people gathered to hear his address.

From the very outset of his papacy, John Paul II demonstrated great interest in the whole question of the role of science in the modern world in general and the relationship between science and faith in particular. Developing the thought of his predecessors, the Pope emphasised that science should promote peace and justice and always be at the service of the human person. John Paul II invariably had a great interest in the continuation and development of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in line with the remarkable intuition of his venerated predecessor Pius XI who refounded it, but with an increased emphasis on looking at the human, moral and spiritual problems of our time. He also laid stress on the need for science to safeguard the environment and contribute to the combating of poverty in developing countries. On 30 March 1979 he received in audience the members of the European Physical Society (researchers from twenty-eight countries from the West and the East of the continent) and laid emphasis on the fact that science must always respect the dignity of the human person. John Paul II's interest in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences showed itself in so many ways and on so many different occasions, both public and private, that the task of summarising his teachings on the subject in an exhaustive way is virtually impossible. Here we will recall some of his addresses, all of which are of extremely high quality and interest, in which he encouraged the Academy and its activities. At his first meeting with the Academy on 10 November 1979, on the occasion of the commemoration of Albert Einstein, the Pope underlined the fundamental aim of science, namely the search for truth:

'The search for truth is the task of basic science. The researcher who moves on this first aspect of sciences feels all the fascination of St. Augustine's words: 'Intellectum valde ama', 'he loves intelligence' and the function that is characteristic of it, to know truth. Pure science is a good which all people must be able to cultivate in full freedom from all forms of international slavery or intellectual colonialism ... Basic research must be free with regard to political and economic authorities, which must cooperate in its development, without hampering it in its creativity or harnessing it to serve their own purposes. Like any other truth, scientific truth is, in fact, answerable only to itself and to the supreme Truth, God, the creator of man and of all things'.

The Pope went on to recall the harmony which exists between science and faith. 'The existence of this Pontifical Academy of Sciences, of which in its first establishment Galileo was a member, and which is now formed by scientists without any ethical or religious discrimination, is a visible and high demonstration among Peoples of the harmony which can exist between the truth of science and the truth of faith'.

Reflecting the ideas and hopes of his predecessors, John Paul II emphasised the role and the goals of the Academy once again at the time of this first address to the Academicians:

'the Church of Rome united with all those in the world, attaches great importance to the function of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences ... The title 'Pontifical' attributed to this Academy signifies, as you know, the interest and support of the Church. These are manifested in very different forms, of course, from those of ancient patronage, but they are no less deep and effective. As the distinguished President of your Academy, the late Msgr. Lemaître, wrote: 'Does the Church need science? ... nothing human is alien to the Christian. How could the Church have failed to take an interest in the most noble of the strictly human occupations: the search for truth? ... Both ... the believing scientist and the non-believing scientist ... endeavour to decipher the palimpsest of nature, in which the traces of the various stages of the long evolution of the world are overlaid on one another and confused. The believer has perhaps the advantage of knowing that the enigma has a solution, that the underlying writing is, when all is said and done, the work of an intelligent being, therefore that the problem raised by nature has been raised in order to be solved, and that its difficulty is doubtless proportionate to the present or future capacity of mankind. This will not give him, perhaps, new resources in his investigation, but it will contribute to maintaining in him a healthy optimism without which a sustained effort cannot be kept up for long'.

The Pope also expressed his wish to re-examine the Galileo question:

'To go beyond this stand taken by the Council, I hope that theologians, scholars and historians, animated by a spirit of sincere collaboration, will study the Galileo case more deeply and, in loyal recognition of wrongs from whatever side they come, will dispel the mistrust that still opposes, in many minds, a fruitful concord between science and faith, between the Church and the world. I give all my support to this task, which will be able to honour the truth of faith and of science and open the door to future collaboration ... For in this affair the agreements between religion and science were more numerous and above all more important than the incomprehensions which led to the bitter and painful conflict that continued in the course of the following centuries'.

As is known, on 31 October 1992 John Paul II received in audience the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Academy presented to the Holy Father the conclusions reached by the 'Commission for the Study of the Ptolemaic-Copernican Controversy'.

One of the fields of interest of the Academy that the Pope insisted on in particular is the theme of 'Science for Peace'. While addressing the Academicians who had gathered on 12 November 1983 for the plenary session on science and peace, the Pope said: 'Science, which brings together researchers, technicians, workmen, which stimulates political and economic power, which transforms society at all levels and in all its forms, this same science today has a task which is both vital and urgent, that of collaborating to preserve and re-establish Peace'. After recalling the addresses of his predecessors, the Pope went on to say:

'Unarmed prophets have been the object of derision in every age, especially on the part of shrewd politicians, the supporters of power. But today must not our civilisation recognise that humanity has need of them? Should not they alone be heard by the whole of the world's scientific community, so that the laboratories and factories of death may give place to laboratories of life? The scientist can exercise his freedom to choose the field of his own research. When, in a particular historical situation, it is all but inevitable that a certain form of scientific research will be used for purposes of aggression, he must make a choice that will enable him to work for the good of people, for the building up of peace. By refusing certain fields of research, inevitably destined, in the concrete historical circumstances, for deadly purposes, the scientists of the whole world ought to be united in a common readiness to disarm science and to form a providential force for peace'.

Another point which John Paul II mentioned repeatedly was the need for scientific research and scientific applications to respect moral questions. This means that scientists should exercise wisdom when making concrete use of their scientific discoveries. The worldwide scientific community, as represented by the various Academies of Sciences, could be an instrument for the construction of peace and development. This was what the Pope said on the occasion of the second centenary of the Italian Academy of Science known as the Forty:

'It is the strictly scientific task of the Academies to advance the frontiers of science. But it is also their *social mission to respond to the questions and pleas of society*. It is their moral duty to carry out their activities at the service of humanity and of peace among peoples. Particularly during the last hundred years, science has been one of the majors factors of the development of society and of man's future. But often, the ever more sophisticated and deadly technology that has stemmed from science has been used against man, to the point of creating fearsome stockpiles of both conventional and nuclear arms, and of biological and chemical weapons, capable of destroying a large part of humanity.

We hold that the Academies of Sciences, made up as they are of scientists of world fame and undoubted probity, as faithful disciples and seekers after truth, and in view of their independence and freedom of judgement, can give a *valid response to the doubts that assail the modern world*. With their knowledge and conscientiousness, they can likewise direct technology toward the true good of humanity.

This duty of providing information and guidance for the public authorities and for public opinion proves that the Academies, while preserving their necessarily very selective structures, must not close themselves within the ivory tower of their private debates. They must be open to discussions, with the whole of humanity, on *the problems that assail people today* as they face the next millennium'.

In this universal vision, John Paul II reminded the Academies and scientists in general of their obligations concerning the use of their scientific discoveries:

'Today more than ever, science must *contribute with all its power to true human progress* and it must banish the impending threat of the criminal use of its discoveries; therefore it is necessary that the scientific community, aware that science constitutes an essential element of human development, must watch over the correct use of the fruits of its research in the service of humanity'.¹

On 22 October 1996, this time in the form of a message on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of its refoundation, John Paul II once again chose the Pontifical Academy of Sciences as a qualified interlocutor to expound certain important reflections on the theory of evolution. Returning to and developing certain

observations made by his predecessor Pius XII in the Encyclical *Humani Generis*, he now added that 'new knowledge leads the theory of evolution to be no longer considered as a mere hypothesis', thereby recognising 'that this theory has progressively imposed itself on the attention of researchers following a series of discoveries made in the various disciplines of knowledge', imposing itself also, therefore, on the attention of theologians and bible experts.

John Paul II appointed 106 new members of the Academy, amongst whom are to be found such luminaries of the scientific world as: C.B. Anfinsen, W. Arber, G.S. Becker, P. Berg, S. Bergstrom, E. Berti, G. Blobel, T. Boon-Falleur, N. Cabibbo, L.A. Caffarelli, L.L. Cavalli-Sforza, C. Cohen-Tannoudji, O.D. Creutzfeldt, A.C. Crombie, P.J. Crutzen, E. De Giorgi, M. Eigen, K. Fukui, S.W. Hawking, V.I. Keilis-Borok, T.-D. Lee, J. Lederberg, N.M. Le Douarin, J.-M. Lehn, Y.I. Manin, M.J. Molina, J.E. Murray, S.P. Novikov, R. Noyori, M.F. Perutz, W.D. Phillips, J.C. Polanyi, I. Potrykus, V. Prelog, V. Ramanathan, M.J. Rees, C. Rubbia, A. Salam, M. Sela, K. Siegbahn, C.H. Townes, C.N. Yang, H. Umezawa, H.A. Zewail, and A. Zichichi. He also recently revived an important tradition of the Academy in making Cardinals of eminent learning members of the Academy: in this case, Cardinal C.M. Martini and Cardinal J. Ratzinger. The importance he attached to the Academy was also expressed in the detailed and extensive restoration work carried out to its Renaissance buildings.

In a letter sent to Padre George Coyne, the Director of the Vatican Observatory and a member of the Council of the Academy, a document which is certainly one of the most profound there is on the subject of the dialogue between science and faith, John Paul II observed that science has acted to purify faith and that faith has acted to generate scientific research, a truth demonstrated by the fact that Galilean modern science was born in a Christian climate marked by the increasing assimilation of the message of freedom placed in the heart of man. Thus, in the same letter, referring to the wider context of universities, the Pope declared that:

'The Church and academic institutions, because they represent two institutions which are very different but very important, are mutually involved in the domain of human civilisation and world culture. We carry forward, before God, enormous responsibilities towards the human condition because historically we have had and we continue to have a determining influence in the development of ideas and values and the course of human actions'.

For this to come about, the Pope stressed the importance of there being experts and places especially dedicated to such a dialogue: 'the Church for a long time has recognised the importance of this by founding the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, in which scientists of world renown regularly meet each other to discuss their research and to communicate to the wider community the directions research is taking. But much more is required'. And in this 'more' John Paul II saw the need, in their irreplaceable dialogue, for scientific institutions and the Catholic Church not to think in a reductive way about the settling of ancient conflicts. He also stressed the important need for mutual help in the investigation of truth and for a shared development of responsibility towards the good of the peoples of the world and the future of mankind. And it was with this approach, marked by a new readiness to engage in service, that the President of the Academy, Professor Cabibbo (already serving his third term), in his address to John Paul II on the occasion of the Jubilee plenary session of 2000 on the subject of 'science and the future of mankind', spoke about the 'renewed commitment' of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, in conjunction with the Holy See, to the good of the whole Church, of the scientific community, and of those men and women who inquire and believe. It can rightly be affirmed that, during the intense almost twenty-seven years of his pontificate, John Paul II, with his documents and his praxis, opened up a new horizon of light between faith and science.

An assessment of his imposing pastoral action was made by His Holiness Benedict XVI in his first message to the Church and to the world on 20 April 2005:

'Pope John Paul II leaves a Church that is more courageous, freer, more youthful. She is a Church which, in accordance with his teaching and example, looks serenely at the past and is not afraid of the future. With the Great Jubilee she entered the new millennium, bearing the Gospel, applied to today's world through the authoritative rereading of the Second Vatican Council. Pope John Paul II rightly pointed out the Council as a "compass" by which to take our bearings in the vast ocean of the third millennium'.

1 *Memorie di Scienze Fisiche e Naturali*, Rend. Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze detta dei XL, V, 7, (11) 33-36 (1985).