

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we come together this week, the Church invites us to celebrate the Feast of St. John Paul II on October 22 - a moment to pause and reflect on the paschal mystery that animates our lives, calling us from the death of sin to the resurrection of new life in Christ. We can rediscover the treasure of our baptism through the Word of God and the Eucharist which we celebrate in our parish community. Let us draw near to this great saint whose life and witness speak directly to our journey of conversion.

Karol Wojtyła, St. John Paul II, was a man who knew the weight of the cross. Orphaned early, he faced the darkness of Nazi occupation and the oppression of communism in Poland. Yet, through these trials, he encountered the living Christ, who transformed his suffering into a radiant testimony of hope. We, too, are called to this transformation. If we see our own poverty - our attachments, fears, and sins - we can, like John Paul II, hear the voice of the Risen One: "Do not be afraid!" We can hear John Paul II's iconic words at the start of his pontificate, "Open wide the doors to Christ."

In his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, St. John Paul II reminded us that Christ is the center of history and of every human heart. Scripture can become a mirror, revealing both our brokenness and God's mercy. How many of us have experienced, in these moments, the Lord speaking directly to our struggles, calling us to trust Him as He called Peter to walk on water? John Paul II lived this trust. He forgave his would-be assassin, visited prisoners, and reached out to the marginalized, showing us that the Gospel is not a theory, but a lived reality.

The saint's love for the family, which he called the "domestic church" in *Familiaris Consortio*, hopefully resonates deeply with us. Can we see families reborn - parents embracing the gift of life, raising children in the faith, and facing the crosses of daily life with the strength of the Eucharist? John Paul II saw the family as the foundation of the new evangelization. Would it not be amazing to see Catholic families rediscovering their baptism and young people answering the call to priesthood and religious life? Is it possible to see this in our world today? St. John Paul II thought it was possible, and he laid the foundations in today's Church for this to happen.

This feast is not just a commemoration, but a call to conversion. St. John Paul II's life challenges us to ask: Are we truly open to the Holy Spirit? Are we willing to let go of our plans and follow Christ, as the apostles did, leaving their nets behind? We can walk this path together. Let us take up his prayer, *Totus Tuus* - totally yours, Mary - entrusting ourselves to the Mother who leads us to her Son. May we, like John Paul II, become instruments of God's mercy, bringing light to a world hungering for hope.

As we prepare for this feast, let us ask the Lord to be able to live with renewed zeal, celebrating His mercy in the Sacrament of Confession and finding in the Eucharist the source of our strength to love one another as Christ loves us. May St. John Paul II intercede for us, that we may be faithful to the mission entrusted to us, proclaiming the Gospel without fear until the day we meet the Lord in glory.

Peace,