

# CHIESE E RELIGIONI ONORANO PAPA GIOVANNI PAOLO II

## PATRIARCATO DI MOSCA E DI TUTTE LE RUSSIE

*Mi permetto di esprimere a Tutta la Chiesa Romano-Cattolica le profonde condoglianze in occasione della morte del Papa di Roma Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II. Assieme a Voi compiangiamo la perdita che ha colpito la Chiesa Cattolica. Il compianto Pontefice dell'antica cattedra di Roma si è distinto per la sua dedizione all'ideale scelto nella giovane età, per la volontà ardente verso il servizio cristiano e la testimonianza.*

*Malgrado le pesanti infermità, lui ha continuato a rimanere fedele al suo dovere, occupandosi con coraggio del suo gregge fino all'ultimo giorno. Con il portare le sofferenze senza rumore, accompagnate con la preghiera e con la fiducia nella volontà del Signore Misericordioso, ha dato l'esempio che ispira. Il Pontificato di Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II è durato un'intera epoca sia per la vita della Chiesa Romano Cattolica, che per la storia contemporanea. La Persona del Papa scomparso, le sue opere e le sue idee hanno esercitato una grande influenza sul corso degli avvenimenti mondiali. Spero che il nuovo periodo in arrivo nella vita della Chiesa Romano-Cattolica aiuterà a rinnovare tra le nostre Chiese i rapporti di comune rispetto e di amore fraterno e cristiano. Offro la preghiera al Vincitore della morte e al Signore della vita, al nostro Gesù Cristo in suffragio per l'anima del Santo Padre Papa Giovanni Paolo II nella comunione dei giusti. A lui sia eterna memoria.*

ALESSIO II

*Patriarca di Mosca e di tutte le Russie*

*Con profonda tristezza esprimo a tutta la Chiesa Romano-Cattolica le mie condoglianze in occasione del ritorno al Signore del Papa di Roma Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II. Il lungo servizio di Sua Santità, quale Capo della Chiesa Romano-Cattolica, è stato una tappa importante nella storia contemporanea di essa. Nella nostra Chiesa c'è stata sempre una buona valutazione sul servizio del compianto Papa sulle numerose questioni della vita sociale, sull'affermazione in essa degli eterni valori cristiani, sulla necessità del rinnovamento del ruolo morale dei cristiani nelle condizioni del mondo secolarizzato. Gli ultimi giorni di Giovanni Paolo II hanno sottolineato dei momenti che gli hanno acquistato la stima universale. La fede solida, la ferma sopportazione delle sofferenze hanno indotto milioni di persone ad ammirare il coraggio di quest'uomo. Spero con sincerità che la memoria del Papa scomparso, in futuro, servirà per instaurare le buone interrelazioni tra le nostre Chiese, diventerà un pegno per superare le esistenti difficoltà. Pregho affinché il Signore Gesù Cristo dia il riposo eterno all'anima del Santo Padre Papa Giovanni Paolo II. Nell'amore del Signore,*

KIRILL

*Presidente del Dipartimento delle Relazioni Ecclesiali Esterne di Mosca*

# **PATRIARCATO ECUMENICO DI COSTANTINOPOLI**

*His Holiness Pope John Paul II, having fulfilled the duty of life, which is common to all humans, has fallen asleep in the Lord. May God give rest to his soul in the place of the living, where there is no sorrow, grief nor mourning.*

*Pope John Paul II envisioned the restoration of the unity of the Christians and he worked for its realization. Thus, and in order to give the mark of his papacy, he visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate only a year after his election, and together with Patriarch Demetrios declared the formation of the Joint Committee for the inception of the Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics. He did not hesitate before pains and sacrifices in order to bring the message of the Gospel to the entire world and to contribute to the establishment of peace. History will also recount his crucial contribution to the fall of atheistic communism. There are not many such brave men of vision, as the departed Pope. During his passage through the Hierarchy and especially through the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, he drew deep his traces on her and on the history of all humanity, and he has left behind the indelible imprint of his strong personality. Many of his initiatives have been inception of developments, which still advance today. He was a pioneer in many issues. For this reason, his death is a loss not only to his Church, but to all of Christianity as well, and to the international community in general, who desires peace and justice.*

*We express our deep personal sorrow and on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the resting of our beloved brother in Christ, and we share the mourning of the millions of our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters worldwide.*

*May his memory be eternal and may the Lord of life and death bring forth a most worthy successor, among the many personalities that adorn the hierarchy of the sister Church.*

**BARTHOLOMEW I**  
*Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople*

## **Lettera di condoglianze**

*Words cannot express our feelings of loss upon the falling asleep in the Lord of the beloved Pontiff, His Holiness Pope John Paul II. At this understandable time of sorrow, we wish to express to the Vatican and to the entire Roman Catholic Church our Modesty's personal wholehearted condolences and those on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.*

*As Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church for more than 26 years, Pope John Paul II offered the Church and the world an incredible ministry. He traveled tirelessly around the globe to spread the message of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He fought heroically for the advancement of human rights and freedom for those he knew and those he did not know. He always promoted Christian unity and tolerance between the world's religions through Inter-Christian and Interfaith Dialogue.*

*Our Modesty was blessed to meet with Pope John Paul II on four occasions. Each time we discussed the dire need for unification between our two Churches. The return of the relics of St Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom to the Orthodox Church was a supreme act of love by Pope John Paul II toward his brothers and sisters in the Christian East. We will continue to hope, pray and work for this unification.*

*Pope John Paul II left behind an indelible mark on Christianity and on the world. He will be remembered as a man of great compassion, charisma and love of neighbour.*

*He will also be remembered as a man who always adhered to his convictions. All of humanity admired and loved him and the entire globe mourns his loss.*

*We express to you once again our sincerest and heartfelt condolences. May God grant rest to the soul of the departed Pope John Paul II among the saints and bring comfort to the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church during this time of mourning.  
May his memory be eternal.*

BARTHOLOMEW I  
*Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople*

## **CHIESA ORTODOSSA DI GRECIA**

*Returning from the Funeral Service of the late Pontiff John Paul II, whose memory is blessed, I would like to express once again my sincere sorrow for the loss of this great personality of the Roman Catholic Church, the undoubted protagonist in the cause of world peace, freedom and human rights.*

*The entire world will remember him also for his affectionate approach to the youth, his protection of the unprivileged and his defence of the principles and values of European civilisation.*

*Hellenism will be grateful to him most particularly for proclaiming Saints Cyril and Methodius, Illuminators of the Slavs, "heavenly Patrons of Europe" (Encyclical Letter Egregiae Virtutis, 31 December 1980). As he noted later: 'the brothers from Thessaloniki were heirs not only to the faith but also to the culture of Ancient Greece continued by Byzantium. And we know how important this heritage has been for the entire European civilisation and, directly or indirectly, for the whole of world civilisation'.*

*His historical visit to Greece in 2001 created new bridges of communication, reconciliation and cooperation between our two Apostolic Churches.*

*This is why I wholeheartedly wish that his successor be of equal value, so that he may continue with the same enthusiasm the efforts of the dialogue "of love in truth".*

*His Beatitude* CHRISTODOULOS  
*Archbishop of Athens and All Greece*

*It is with profound sadness that I send You this letter to express my deep sorrow for the demise of the great Pope John Paul II.*

*I remember that I had half my actual age when I first met the Holy Father in Rome. I had just started deepening my theological education and I was vividly interested in his theological thought. In the quarter of a century which followed, I was impressed by the firm and coherent way this great Pope guided his Church to the 21st century. Today I can say that he has left an indelible mark not only on the Catholic Church but on me personally.*

*Perhaps the most significant Message Pope John Paul II has left to me is his steady conviction that unity among Christians is an absolute priority.*

ATHANASIOS  
*Bishop of Achaia Representation of the Church of Greece to the European Union*

## **MESSAGGIO DELL'ARCIVESCOVO DI ATENE E DI TUTTA LA GRECIA**

*Deeply grieved at the announcement of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II's repose, as we express our sincerest sympathy and heartfelt condolences. Pope John Paul was an outstanding spiritual leader who for more than twenty six years ably guided the barque of the Roman Catholic Church through the turbulent waters of our changing times, times fraught with new questions, and challenges for the Church and society at large. He was instrumental in shaping the new face of today's world. He untiringly laboured for the advancement of reconciliation amongst peoples and for the rapprochement of the Churches. His Charismatic, presence will be deeply missed. We humbly pray that our Lord Jesus Christ grant rest to his blessed soul and show forth a worthy successor.*

CHRISTODOULOS  
*Archbishop of Athens and All Greece*

## **PATRARCATO GRECO-ORTODOSSO DI ALESSANDRIA**

*Con profondissima afflizione e con dolore nell'anima per il trapasso al Signore del venerando Primate della Chiesa Cattolica Romana, Papa Giovanni Paolo II, esprimiamo alla vostra Chiesa rimasta orfana, alla Gerarchia nel dolore, al clero e al popolo le più calorose condoglianze della Chiesa di San Marco, seconda Sede (tra le Chiese ortodosse), e nostre personali.*

*Nel passato abbiamo avuto occasione, accompagnando il Patriarca Partenio di venerata memoria, di incontrare il defunto Pontefice e di conversare con Lui presso la Santa Sede. Lo ricordiamo per la sua dinamica presenza e testimonianza, attraverso il mondo, negli incontri inter-cristiani e internazionali, per lottare in favore dei diritti umani e per l'affermazione dei principi e dei valori dell'Evangelo. In preghiera affinché il Signore Dio collochi la sua anima nelle tende dei giusti, auguriamo con tutto il cuore per l'elezione di un degno successore del defunto Pontefice.*

THEODOROS  
*di Alessandria*

## **CHIESA ORTODOSSA DI ROMANIA**

*The news of the departing from this world of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, of this tireless apostle of Christian love, defender of human dignity, coming out of the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and a steadfast promoter of the dialogue between Churches has brought us a great sadness in our souls, both to the hierarchs, priests and faithful of the Romanian Orthodox Church, who had the joy to see him and to listen to his word of wisdom, on the Romanian soil.*

*If the whole of humankind has thus lost a pillar of the equilibrium amongst countries and peoples from all over the world, Christianity has lost a great promoter of Christian unity, whose name will always remain written in the chronics of over 26 years of his Pontificate.*

*While being strengthened by the hope for the continuation of this heritage given to as by Pope John Paul II, the clergy, the faithful and, Us, personally, we all address our sincere condolences, praying that the Almighty God rest the soul of His servant, Pope John Paul II with the righteous, in the eternal abode.*

*May his memory be eternal!*

TEOCTIST  
Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

## **CHIESA ORTODOSSA DI SERBIA**

*Indem wir an Gott der Gerechtigkeit, des Friedens und der Liebe beten, der Seele des in den Frieden Gottes geratenen Papstes Johannes Paulus II. Die ewige Seligkeit zu schenken, beteiligen wir uns, samt dem Heiligen Synod der Serbischen Orthodoxen Kirche, in dem Schmerz der Bischöfe, der Priester und der Gläubigen der Katholischen Kirche anlässlich des Abgangs ihres Ersten Hierarchen und äußern unser tiefstes Mitleid.*

PAULUS  
Erzbischof von Pec, Metropolit von Belgrad-Karlowitz und Patriarch von Serbien

## **CHIESA UCRAINA ORTODOSSA NEGLI STATI UNITI D'AMERICA**

*It is with great sadness that I learned today of the falling asleep in the Lord of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, and I wish to humbly extend my sincerest condolences to the Roman Catholic Church on the passing of their Chief Shepherd from this life to the next.*

*His Holiness was an inspiration to the entire world on many issues, and was especially instrumental in the warming of relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. I shall always treasure my encounters with him, and fervently pray that Our Lord receive him into His Heavenly Kingdom.*

*May his memory be eternal. Vi cnaja jemu pamjat'!*

VSEVOLOD  
Archbishop of Scopelos

## **"HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH" IN WASHINGTON**

*I learned today of the falling asleep of the most venerable, respected and beloved Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II On behalf of my Presbyteria, Georgia, and daughters, Myrophora and Chrysanthe. I pray to Almighty God for the eternal and blessed repose of the Holy Father in the tentings of the just where there is no pain, sorrow or suffering, rather, life-everlasting. May the incorporeal guardians and brilliant ministers of grace of the Most High God, Archangels Michael and Gabriel, the Holy, All-Glorious and Pinnacle of the Apostles, Saint Peter, and the great Father of the Church, Saint John Chrysostom, be the Holy Pontiff's constant companions and his fervent intercessors before the Master of All, our Lord, Great God and Savior Jesu Christ, for the safe passage and docking of his soul in its final place of residence, the tranquil harbor of heaven. "My God, look where He has raised the Ecclesia!... Man is now at the right hand of the throne of God, for where the Head is, the Body is also" (St. John Chrysostom). May his memory be eternal.*

GUS G. CHRISTO,  
Ph.D. Protopresbyter

## **CHIESA ORTODOSSA IN AMERICA**

*Having just learned that His Holiness Pope John Paul II has fallen asleep in the Lord, I greet you with brotherly love in Christ and extend the condolences of the Holy Synod of Bishops, Hierarchs, Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America. Throughout the many years of his service as spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church, he was a shining example of dedication to the episcopal ministry and to the high office to which he was called and a "good steward of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10). By word and example, His Holiness constantly reminded all humanity of our shared responsibility to defend the rights of the poor, the defenseless, and those who have no one to speak for them. We are most grateful for his steadfast fidelity in proclaiming the "Gospel of Life" and in safeguarding the dignity and sanctity of life in all its stages. This, perhaps, will be his greatest legacy, not only to the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church, but also for all Christians and all people of good will.*

*Be assured of our prayerful sympathy and Christian solidarity as you face this great loss.*

HERMAN

*Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of all America and Canada Primate of the Orthodox Church in American*

## **PATRIARCATO GRECO ORTODOSSO DI ANTIOCHIA**

*Si è assentato il Sommo Pontefice, il "Papa" nel copro, lasciando al nostro mondo il Suo Spirito, che ha globalizzato gli abitanti della nostra terra, senza preferenze tra uomo e uomo, tra setta e setta. Così tutti hanno compreso che - in Lui e da Lui - sono una sola Famiglia, che sono uniti da Lui nell'amore, per formare la grande Famiglia umana e globale. La misericordia di Dio sia su Giovanni Paolo II. Colui che ha colmato tutto il cosmo con il suo amore ed ancor più con la sua morte.*

Sua Beatitudine IGNAZIO IV HAZIM

*Patriarcato greco ortodosso di Antiochia e tutto l'Oriente*

## **CHIESA SIRO-ORTODOSSA (LIBANO)**

*It was very sad to hear about the death of H.H. Pope John Paul II, whom we respect and deeply love, a man of dialogue, leader of the World, Holy Father, man of initiatives, unforgotten person and the true example.*

*I personally never forget him, since I had met His Holiness many times, in India, in Lebanon, in Syria, in the Vatican and especially in our last meeting in the Vatican on January 28 2005 with your Eminence.*

*I believe he is in Heaven praying and remembering the Church and the world, and we ask him to be our Patron mediating for us in front of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we pray to be gratified with Holy Fathers and Saints who pleased our Lord in their life on the earth.*

THEOPHILUS GEORGE SALIBA

*Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon*

## **PATRIARCATO ECUMENICO**

*Il Metropolita, il Sacro Clero ed il popolo della Sacra Arcidiocesi d'Italia pregano perché il Signore conceda il riposo eterno a Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II, di felice memoria, la cui incrollabile fede, il cui indomito coraggio e viva umanità nell'annunciare il messaggio evangelico di amore, pace, libertà, giustizia, unità e dialogo tra i cristiani e tra gli uomini, grazie ai suoi numerosi viaggi, hanno destato le coscienze di molti nei riguardi dei valori spirituali e morali, modificando il corso della storia contemporanea. Rimarrà indelebile nel nostro cuore il ricordo della sua straordinaria immagine anche a motivo del preziosissimo dono della Chiesa di San Teodoro in Palatino a Roma, segno del suo affetto e della sua generosità nei confronti della Sacra Arcidiocesi. Uniti nella preghiera invochiamo con tutto il cuore: "Eterna sia la sua memoria!".*

*Metropolita GENNADIOS  
Arcivescovo Ortodosso d'Italia ed Esarca per l'Europa Meridionale*

## **CHIESA GRECA ORTODOSSA DI AUSTRALIA**

*On behalf of all Clergy and laity of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and personally. I express sincere sympathy and condolences upon the departure of such a great Pope as Jhon Paul II. He covered, in ceaseless, vigilance, humility, prayers and brave actions, nearly three decades of our critical times. If the thorny problem of Uniatism had not arisen in the dramatic manner we all experienced, the late Pope would have done for the Orthodox Church and Christina unity more than any of his distinguished predecessors. We fervently pray for the repose of his deceased soul.*

*STYLIANOS  
Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia*

## **CHIESA ORTODOSSA RUSSA**

*Please accept my deep condolences on the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. I believe that he was a great Pope perhaps one of the greatest in the entire history of the Roman Catholic Church. He was the most influential religious leader of modernity, and he made an impact on the entire human civilization. Indeed, his influence went far beyond the Roman Catholic Church, which he headed for more than a quarter of a century. His message was heard and appreciated by millions of people all over the world, not only Catholic, but also Orthodox, Protestants, Anglicans, Jews, Muslims people of other faiths and, what is perhaps even more remarkable, by people of no faith. By his presence, by his words, by his smile and by his extraordinary openness he was able to attract millions of people to Christ. In the time when secular politicians in most Western countries work hard, to expel religion from the public sphere, to reduce it to the realm of private devotion, to ban it from schools, universities and from the mass media, John Paul II was a public figure of such magnitude that his every voyage was widely covered and his every pronouncement was commented by the mass media worldwide. He was an "orthodox" Pope in the sense of preserving the traditional attitude of his Church to dogma and morality. His stand on moral issues, such as marriage and family, abortion, contraception, euthanasia and many others, very often evoked criticism on the part of those who wanted traditional values to be replaced*

*by secular ones, and who attempted to oppose humanism to religion. By being traditional, however, the Pope was by no means less humane, being able to develop a universal humanism based on spiritual values opposed to the atheist version of humanism. For many years he contested atheism in his own country, Poland, and he played a part in the collapse of atheist totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe, but he also, contributed enormously to the rediscovery of faith many of those who lost it because of the liberalism and relativism prevailing in democratic Western societies. The Pope's final illness and death were as extraordinary as his life and service. For several consecutive days, minute by minute, all leading world media covered the developing story of his agony, while at the same time commenting on his long service to humanity. Even by laying silently on his deathbed John Paul II was still able to spread the Christian message of hope and resurrection. May his soul rest in peace and may his memory be eternal.*

HILARION  
*Bishop of Vienna and Austria  
Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Union*

## **CHIESA APOSTOLICA ARMENA**

*It is with a heavy heart that we write this letter, having learned of the death of our Brother in Christ, His Holiness John Paul II, Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. On behalf of the worldwide Armenian Church and people, we convey our sentiments of deep sympathy and consolation to our sister Roman Catholic Church, and all clergymen and faithful.*

*Before the Holy Altar of Descent in the Mother Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, we offer our solemn prayers up to God, asking for the repose of his soul. His Holiness' death is a great loss for all of Christendom. May the Almighty bring solace to his pious and faithful flock.*

*We fondly recall our meeting with His Holiness in the Vatican, as well as his historic visit to Armenia in 2001, the first visit of a Bishop of Rome to our biblical land. In recent years, we witnessed the courage and strength displayed by our Brother in Christ during his illness, which provided the most excellent example of dignity, faith, hope and submission to the all-providential Will of God. Throughout the 26-year tenure of Pope John Paul II, His Holiness was a vigilant defender of life and champion of justice. His constant appeals for peace and reconciliation among nations were always based firmly on his strong moral convictions and love of mankind. In more recent years, through his efforts and the work of our predecessors of blessed memory, the fraternal love and solidarity between our two Churches were greater reinforced and made stronger.*

*Today, Armenians dispersed throughout the world sympathize with your Church and faithful, and we stand ready to continue together on the paths of righteousness and service, all for the greater glory of God.*

*We pray that the protective Right Hand of the Almighty grant progress and renewal to the Roman Catholic Church.*

KAREKIN II  
*Supreme Patriarch Catholicos of all Armenians*

## **PATRIARCATO D'ERITREA**

*La Chiesa Ortodossa Eritrea in Europa prova un dolore profondo per la morte di Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II. Convinti del Suo ruolo di Padre di tutti i cristiani del mondo: un padre instancabile, che ha dedicato la Sua vita per i deboli e bisognosi, che*

*ha lottato fortemente per la giustizia e libertà nel mondo, consideriamo pertanto la Sua morte una perdita che ci lascia un vuoto incolmabile. Preghiamo che il Signore lo accolga al Suo fianco. A nome di tutti i suoi credenti, la Chiesa Ortodossa Eritrea in Europa esprime le sue più sentite condoglianze.*

ABUN SHENOUDA  
*Bishop Eritrean Churches in Europe*

## **CHIESA ORTODOSSA DI ERITREA**

*It is with profound sorrow that the Holy Synod of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church and myself received the news of the return to his Creator of His Holiness the late Pope John Paul II*

*In his departure the Christian world has lost a great father who we all mourn.*

ABUNEANTONOUSI  
*Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church*

## **PATRIARCATO DELLA "MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH"**

*It was with profound grief that we have learned about the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.*

*We give thanks to God for his great ministry of leadership and for the warm relations that he fostered between our two Churches.*

*We pray fervently for the repose of the soul of His Holiness.*

BASELIOS MARTHOMA MATHEWS I  
*Patriarch of the Matankara Orthodox Syrian Church Catholicate of the East*

## **FEDERAZIONE LUTERANA MONDIALE**

*Receiving the news about the death of His Holiness John Paul II, we believe that the Risen Lord has called him home to experience the power of resurrection that he proclaimed to the world. For this reason, this occasion of his death ought to be a moment of thanksgiving for the gifts that God has bestowed on him and for the Godgiven talents that lie invested in the people and the world. Our thanks. giving to God is that by his spiritual strength, he empowered Catholics and other Christians, as well as peoples of other faiths in appreciating and living a deep spirituality. He has helped people to drink from the rock and that rock is Jesus Christ Himself.*

*In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), we pay tribute to his sincere and serious Catholic-Lutheran dialogue that was highlighted by the signature of the Joint Declaration signed by the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in 1999. It is in this doctrine by which the church can stand or fall, that we came to a differentiated consensus after 600 years of disagreement. I believe that the Holy Spirit uses people of faith and stamina as His Holiness John Paul II to work for more unity and reconciliation among the Churches. This Joint Declaration has developed a very constructive*

*relationship between the local Lutheran and Catholic Churches in the Holy Land. For this reason, we thank our Risen Lord for his life.*

*The LWF General Secretary, Dr. Ishmael Noko, in paying tribute to His Holiness said among other things: "On the Pope's travels to different parts of the world, the Eucharistic message of reconciliation in Christ was made explicit in striking ways during public celebrations of Mass at altars erected in the midst of social and political complexities, although only Roman Catholics could partake of the Eucharist as such". Noko added that "the Ecumenical difficulties related to Eucharistic fellowship remain an urgent matter for the churches in the search for Christian unity".*

*We also thank Jesus Christ for His Holiness' endeavors to foster dialogue and understanding among the three Abrahamic religions, for exemplifying a pastoral ministry of unity, for contributing substantially to major ecumenical processes, for his deep and active involvement in issues of social justice, of reconciliation and just peace, and for his relentless search for ways to alleviate suffering from political and economic oppression, from racial and social discrimination and from poverty, hunger and illness worldwide. We give thanks especially that his visit to the Holy Land empowered the witness and presence of Palestinian Churches. His willingness to stand with us is a powerful witness on behalf of his brothers and sisters here.*

*On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy land (ELCJHL) and the whole Lutheran Community in the Holy Land and the Middle East, we would like to offer our heartfelt condolences to the College of Cardinals, the staff at the Vatican and to all Catholics worldwide.*

**BISHOP DR. MUNIB A. YOUNAN**

*The Lutheran Bishop in Jerusalem Vice-President of the Lutheran World Federation,  
Geneva*

## **EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

*I write to offer you my sincerest condolences on behalf of all the members of the Lutheran World Federation and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as we receive the profoundly sad news of the death of Pope John Paul II. Pope John Paul II was an extraordinary individual who, throughout his precedent-setting pontificate, embodied deep faith and a profound commitment to the unity of the Body of Christ. The signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification during his pontificate has established stronger ties between our two communions as old suspicions and mistrust have been laid to rest. His desire to bring Christians closer together, particularly as it was articulated in his encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, marked the beginning of a new era in ecumenical relations. As we remember his entire life and ministry with thanksgiving, we commend him to Almighty God with the confidence given to us through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**The Rev. MARKS. HANSON**

*President, Lutheran World Federation Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America*

## **ALLEANZA MONDIALE DELLE CHIESE RIFORMATE**

*It is with a deep sense of sorrow that we have learned of the passing away of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, Bishop of Rome and Head of the Roman Catholic Church. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches stands together with the millions of Christians mourning his death.*

*We give thanks to God for the impact Pope John Paul II has made in his lifetime as a leader. We give thanks for a ministry in which, as a priest, bishop, and head of the Roman Catholic Church, he sought to bear witness to the Gospel in the contemporary world. He clearly valued being with people in their circumstances sharing in their experiences and struggles. His travels to different parts of the world to encourage the faithful and sometimes challenge the forces of evil will remain a great contribution in a broken world which has needed strong voices for transformation. We celebrate these while knowing fully well that there are also some points of disagreement. Sometimes this has brought out some differences between the Reformed family and the Roman Catholic Church (for example in our different approaches to the ministry of women in the church).*

*While we may not have agreed on every social ethical stance, the papacy of Pope John Paul II has emphasized a clear stand on some major issues which are shared by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. These include concern for human dignity in general, peace, resistance to war (for example in the Iraq war), religious freedom and economic justice. We recall with thanks events such as the two days of Prayer in Assisi (held 10 years apart) that were organized to demonstrate a value for interreligious solidarity for peace that had his personal stamp of leadership. We appreciate his pastoral leadership in these areas, in spite of the fact that differences exist in our views in some areas (for example the ministry of women in the church).*

*Under his long papacy the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has carried out two phases of the Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogues which have brought increased understanding between the Reformed and Roman Catholic families. The first series focused on "Our common understanding of the church" (1984-1990) and the second "The church's witness to the Kingdom of God" (1997-2004). In addition, it was under his papacy that we held a trilateral consultation on Indulgences in which Reformed and Lutheran representatives engaged in discussion with Roman Catholic counterparts - a discussion which until then was not possible for centuries.*

*In terms of ecumenical gains during his papacy, we celebrate more than what was achieved in Reformed-Roman Catholic relationships. The Catholic-Lutheran agreement on central aspects of a doctrine that divided the church in the 16th century (the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 1999) and his 1995 invitation to a reflection on how the papal ministry can be a ministry of Christian unity are only two examples of what we are thankful for.*

*These ecumenical gains during his papacy are important pointers to Pope John Paul's contributions to the gift of unity we have been offered in Jesus Christ.*

*As we thank God for his life and contributions, we pray for the Roman Catholic family through these difficult times.*

*On behalf of the leadership and member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches we offer our condolences as we mourn the death of a pope who has been a good leader for our world - one who knew and understood suffering, and who walked with those who suffer all over the world.*

*Rev. Dr. CLIFTON KIRKPATRICK  
President World Alliance of Reformed Churches*

*We have just learned about an hour ago of the "home going" of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic Church. Our hearts are filled with sorrow as we stand together with you and the millions who are mourning. At the same time, we are filled with thanks for the impact Pope John Paul II has made in his lifetime as a leader in a rather turbulent world. The inspiration we have received as*

*we saw the courage and faith with which His Holiness bore his sufferings especially in his last journey out of this world reminds us of what Paul indicated in II Timothy 4:6-8: "...the time for my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...".*

*On behalf of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, I offer condolences to the entire Roman Catholic Church*

*Rev. Dr. SETRI NYOMI  
General Secretary*

## **CONSIGLIO MONDIALE DELLE CHIESE**

*In the past few weeks the health of His Holiness Pope John Paul II has been both in our prayers and meditations at the World Council of Churches. We observed his courage and determination to be always present among the believers during the Angelus, whether from the window of his residence in the Apostolic Palace or his room at the Gemelli Hospital.*

*Pope John Paul II will be remembered as a great spiritual Leader who nurtured the spirituality of his flock, and at the same time kept the Church alert and responsive to the issues and problems of the world, particularly focusing on the situation of people living under Communist rule.*

*He gave new vigour to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council by insisting, "ecumenism is an irreversible process". Through the Encyclical Letter Ut Unum Sint, he emphasized the importance of dialogue in deepening the Church's commitment to ecumenism. During the Millennium celebrations, he expressed the scope of the Church's mission in the 21st century both internally and externally. Internally, we observed the publication of Apostolic and Pastoral letters that would strengthen the faith of the members of the Roman Catholic Church. Externally, he called for healing memories and inter-Christian and inter-faith prayer meetings on different occasions. During his long Pontificate, he travelled extensively and challenged the world's leaders to bring peace and alleviate poverty.*

*We experienced the ecumenical commitment of Pope John Paul II through the growing relationship between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches. We praise the Lord that celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council started under his leadership. We will continue to pray that the late Pope John Paul II's legacy of commitment to ecumenism will renew our commitment to the search for Visible Unity.*

*SAMUEL KOBIA  
General Secretary World Council of Churches*

## **CHIESA ASSIRA DELL'ORIENTE**

*It is with reverence and respect that we wish to offer the Catholic hierarchy, Clergy and faithful our heartfelt condolences for the return of the late Pope John Paul II to his Creator, the Father of All. By confidence in the same Gospel message that Pope John Paul so eagerly preached to all the People of the world, we beseech our Risen Savior to receive the Pope's soul into the company of his holy saints.*

*I have personally known Pope John Paul II since 1979 and have had the privilege to officially meet him since then on several occasions. As with many other people and*

*issues, the Pope has shown us how strong a passion he held for the Eastern Church in general and for the Assyrian Church of the East, its theology and faithful, in particular. We are so grateful to God for the gift of Pope John Paul II for being among us for all these years. The loss of this great and holy man is being felt throughout the world by every man of goodwill. Indeed, Pope John Paul II was a man beloved by God and by millions of people around the world.*

*Along with the Catholic Church, we pray the Holy Spirit to lead you and the rest of the Cardinals during the soon to be held Conclave to elect a new Roman Pontiff for the Catholic Church. Please be assured of our continued prayers and fraternal wishes.*

KHANANIA MARDINKHA IV  
Catholicos Patriarch Assyrian Church of the East

## **CONFERENZA DELL'UNIONE DI UTRECHT**

*On behalf of the International Old Catholic Bishops Conference I offer our condolences to the Roman Catholic Community because of the death of Pope John Paul II. We sympathize with you in your bereavement and we feel with you the great loss of this highly appreciated church leader.*

*Although many years may be needed to describe the interesting and important role John Paul II has played both within Christianity and the world community, it is already clear from now, that he will be remembered as one of the greatest church leaders of the last centuries.*

*His commitment to the social issues will be remembered as bearing witness to the Lord's care for the poor who are more and more marginalised in our world. With his tireless energy and his genuine conviction he stood up for justice and peace and challenged, in the best prophetic tradition, all those who have political and social responsibility.*

*Pope John Paul II will be remembered as the great pope who influenced the relations between West and Eastern Europe in such a way that the oppressing schemes of the cold war did not function anymore. He will be remembered as the one who helped to give Europe its unity back.*

*Pope John Paul II was also the one who stimulated ecumenical contacts and gave space to ecumenical relationships. As well as the Orthodox, the Protestant and the Anglican Church families, also our small community of Churches profited from his awareness that the unity of Christians is one of the most important conditions for the convincing proclamation of the Gospel in our modern world. As a church leader from the highest level, the Pope gave voice to Christianity as a worldwide invitation to join the joy of the Gospel.*

*Moreover Pope John Paul II will never be forgotten because of his steps of reconciliation towards Jews and Muslims. His open mind overcame walls of prejudices and opened ways of collaboration between the great religious traditions.*

*We pray Pope John Paul II may be received home now, in the light of the risen Lord, whom he has served and loved during his long life on earth. That he who was a shepherd from the bottom of his heart, may be welcomed by our Lord, the Great Shepherd of all mankind. We pray for all those who mourn about the Pope's death, that they may receive peace and comfort from the Spirit who strengthens us all with the faith of Easter. The peace of the Lord be with you all!*

D JORIS VERCAMMEN, A.O.L.  
Archbishop of Utrecht

# THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

*In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Church in Rome he said, "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's". We are strengthened by this sure and certain faith, that "whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's". The religious leaders and people affiliated with the Massachusetts Council Churches extend, our, heartfelt condolences to the Roman Catholic Church and all its members on the loss of this energetic and humble religious leader, and we pray that his longing for reconciliation will be a continuing inspiration to people everywhere. Whatever else can be said about the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II - and it has been a long and creative period - his commitment to foster Christian unity will be one of his outstanding legacies. The papal Encyclical Ut Unum Sint (That All May Be One), issued in 1995 and reportedly shaped considerably by his own hand, is a comprehensive and heartfelt chart that builds on previous work and points the way forward in concrete, challenging ways. The language soars and inspires. In a number of ways, many of the initiatives that he took with Churches of the East, and West, some of which were more fruitful than others, were foreshadowed in this text. John Paul II was willing to take risks for Christian unity. His energetic spirit transformed ecumenical longings into concrete actions. He saw the connection between head change and heart work. He articulated this connection with theological substance and ringing clarity. One of my favorite quotes from that Encyclical is "Jesus himself, at the hour of his passion, prayed 'that they may all be one' (Jn 17:21). This unity which the Lord has bestowed on his Church and in which he wishes to embrace all people is not something added on, but stands at the very heart of Christ's mission. Nor is it some secondary attribute of the community of his disciples. Rather, it belongs to the very essence of this community. God wills the Church because he wills unity, and unity is an expression of the whole depth of his agape". We can give no more fitting testimony to his life and ministry than to continue to carry out the ecumenical mandate about which he cared with such unreserved passion. We know that God will bless this man for unity with the good and humble of heart.*

DIANE C. KESSLER

*Executive Director Massachusetts Council of Churches and Christians throughout the  
Commonwealth*

## "EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION"

*The Rev. Dr. Billy Graham has asked me to convey his deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences upon the passing of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Please be assured of his prayers for all who have been called of God to give leadership to the Roman Catholic Church during these difficult days.*

*Dr. Graham had a profound and abiding respect for the Holy Father, and he will always cherish the memory of his warm Christian fellowship with Pope John Paul II during their private meetings at the Vatican. As Dr. Graham said to an American television journalist this past Saturday evening, he feels as if he has lost a member of his own family. He also will never forget the privilege he had in 1978 of preaching in St. Anne's Cathedral in Krakow at the kind invitation of the Cardinal of Krakow - at almost the exact moment of his election to the papacy. Dr. Graham believes that through their relationship much progress was made in developing respect between the Roman*

*Catholic Church and Evangelicals, and he hopes that a new generation of leaders will have the vision to carry this forward.*

*Dr. Graham deeply regrets that for reasons of health he will not be able to attend in person the funeral service for Pope John Paul II. He has, however, asked his eldest daughter, Dr. Anne Graham Lotz, to represent both him and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association at the service in the Vatican. Mrs. Lotz is a well-known author and teacher on Christian themes, particularly to ecumenical gatherings of women in many parts of the world. She will be accompanied by her daughter, Mrs. Morrow Rightmeyer; her personal assistant, Miss Margaret Hoenig; and myself.*

*We rejoice with you in the life of God's dedicated servant, Pope John Paul II, and we also rejoice with you in the hope of the resurrection through our Lord Jesus Christ. May God's peace and blessing rest upon you and upon all God's people during these days.*

JOHN N. AKERS  
Special Assistant to Dr. Billy Graham

## **DIALOGO INTERNAZIONALE CATTOLICO PENTECOSTALE**

*I am deeply saddened by the news of the passing of His Holiness, John Paul II. It was my privilege to meet with John Paul II on a number of occasions. His humanity, his warmth, his personal sensitivity, his ecumenical commitment, and his sense of humor are among the many memories that I will not soon forget. In a private audience with him in 1989, he paid special attention to my wife and sons.*

*In a 1993 audience, Cardinal Cassidy called me to the head of a long line of Bishops and introduced me. His Holiness held up the line long enough to address me personally. "So you are a Pentecostal", he began. "Yes, I am", I responded. Then I thanked him for his support of the Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue. As I relaxed my grip to move on, he grabbed my hand again. "You know", he advised me, "Pentecost is where the Church first received her power". "Yes, your Holiness, it certainly is", I returned. Again I relaxed my grip, but he held my hand tightly and this time he pulled me close to him to make his point. "And it is still the same today!". Then with a twinkle in his eye he smiled warmly and released my hand. "Amen!", I responded. And I moved on. A few minutes later, he laughed and joked with us as we stood with him for photographs.*

*More than once, he showed his frustration at his inability to control his body when he greeted me. Yet, he was a winsome host at the various meals we shared together. I was humbled by his invitations to process with him, to lead the faithful in reciting the Creed, or to offer prayer on behalf of the world in services over which he presided.*

*John Paul II pointed us toward the Giver of life - from within a culture of death. He had the clarity of vision matched by few others in our time. He was a decisive leader in a time of mixed messages and declining moral certainty. He worked his way through the limitations his condition imposed upon his physical body and he rose above them to carry out his vocation with conviction. His life was a powerful reminder that God works even through those that the world would quickly pass by or encourage to die, because they are weak, limited by physical ailments, or simply not whole. Repeatedly, he reminded us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever", and it was in His Name that he carried on with His work.*

*John Paul II inspired us to hope - from within a culture of despair. He affirmed the future. He engaged and challenged the young. He led the world to think regal thoughts by empowering his own regal thoughts with his own regal actions. He called us to embrace Jesus Christ in a personal way, the one who suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation, and to bear witness to God's love before the world. He summoned the Church to a new*

*evangelization that begins within each individual and extends outward to embrace the world. He never lost sight of why he was in the position he was in.*

*John Paul II called us to peace - from within a culture of violence, terror, and war. He provided a vivid example of how Christians should live. He was open about his strengths and his weaknesses. He forgave his would be assassin, unilaterally and unconditionally. He reached out to the Jews by visiting the Holocaust center in Jerusalem. He offered his resources to resolve the siege at Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. He provided moral direction to the world's leaders. He showed love, respect, and friendship to Orthodox Christians everywhere. He called Christian leaders, Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, Evangelical, Holiness, and Pentecostal, to envision and celebrate the new possibilities offered by a new millennium. He commemorated and celebrated the lives and sacrifices of the martyrs of the 20th Century, regardless of their Christian tradition. Repeatedly he offered his condolences and his prayers to the millions who have suffered loss through natural calamity, war, pestilence, and sickness around the world. Twice he persuaded the world's religious leaders to join him at Assisi in order to pray for the peace of the world. John Paul II called us to love - from within a culture marked by selfishness. He reminded us that before we were Christian, we were human beings. He demonstrated that as Christians, our willingness to serve God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, requires an equal commitment to serve our fellow human beings. He bore a firm and unambiguous witness to the Truth as it is revealed in Jesus Christ, even when it did not measure up to the world's standards of political correctness. He did not fear dialogue, or criticism, or even death. He simply walked with God. And in so doing, he reflected something of the love of the One who calls us to similar acts of faithful service as well.*

*I have lost a friend. I will miss him! The last time I was in his presence was for evening vespers at St Peter's Basilica, November 13, 2004 when he led the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Unitatis Redintegratio. I felt for him as he struggled to complete his part in the service. But he did not give up, and as he left the place, he raised his hand in blessing. Please accept my condolences on this sorrowful occasion. I will be in prayer with you and all those who now must seek Almighty God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - for direction in selecting his successor.*

CECIL M. ROBECK, JR.

*Co-chair of the International Roman Catholic - Pentecostal Dialogue*

## TAIZE

*La mort du bien-aimé Pape Jean-PAul II MEe touche aux profondeurs. C'est en 1962, au Concile du Vatican, que je l'ai connu. Comme Archevêque de Cracovie, il est venu deux fois à Taizé. Je l'ai rencontré en Pologne. J'ai été invité plusieurs fois à parler au pèlerinage des mineurs de Piekary que présidait l' Archevêque de Cracovie et j'ai même été son hôte quelques jours, logeant dans sa maison à Cracovie. Comme Pape, vous le savez, Jean-Paul II est venu à Taizé en 1986. Le Pape me recevait chaque année en audience privée et il m'arrivait alors de penser aux épreuves de sa vie: dans son enfance, il avait perdu sa mère, dans sa jeunesse, son père et son unique frère. Et je me disais: cherche une parole pour réjouir, et même consoler, son coeur en lui parlant d'une espérance que nous découvrons chez beaucoup de jeunes, en l'assurant de la confiance que notre communauté lui portait. Consumé par le feu de l'amour de l'Eglise et de la famille humaine, Jean-Paul II faisait tout pour communiquer cette flamme. Il donna un souffle à l'universalité de l'Eglise, entre autres en allant dans la plupart des pays du monde rencontrer les humains, pan'ois les interpeller, souvent exprimer la compassion de Dieu. Ses plus de cent voyages demeurent la claire expression d'une âme tellement attentive à, préparer un avenir de paix Je serai présent à Rome vendredi pour les obsèques et, à la même heure, mes frères célébreront une messe à Taizé.*

## **CONGRESSO MONDIALE MENNONITA**

*On behalf of the Mennonite World Conference, we offer heartfelt sympathy to the Catholic Church as we join in mourning the death of Pope John Paul II.*

*At the same time, we give thanks to God for the gift this man has been in so many ways for the peoples and churches of the world. We are grateful in particular for his service on behalf of reconciliation. We believe that the International Dialogue of the Catholic Church and the Mennonite World Conference, with its joint recognition that we are "Called Together to be Peacemakers", stands as a tribute to John Paul II's exemplary spirit of repentance and his deep desire to heal divisive memories.*

DR. NANCY R. HEISY  
*President Mennonite World Conference*

DR. LARRY MILLER  
*Executive Secretary*

## **CHIESA SIRO-CALDEA (USA)**

*On behalf of the Synod of Bishops and ourself, we desire to express our heartfelt condolences to you on the falling asleep in the Lord of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, your Holy Father, the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of the West. We remembered His Holiness, Pope John Paul II in the Quiddisha Ourbana (Holy Liturgy) this morning and shall celebrate the Quiddisha Ourbana of the Falling Asleep of the Holy Patriarch tomorrow morning 4th April 2005 (which the Ancient Synodus on Canon Laws do not permit to be celebrated on any Sunday). During our only meeting with His Holiness, still the Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow, having returned from the election of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II of blessed Memory in September, 1978, his keen wit was overshadowed by his intriguing and penetrating blue eyes probing for answers on Eastern Christian spirituality. Your Church has not only lost a spiritual giant but a truly loving Holy Father who sought to fulfil the command and prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ, "Father, that they might be one, even as we are one", especially with the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Brethren.*

MAR MIKHAEL O.S.J.  
*Metropolitan of the Americas Eastern Catholic Archdiocese (Chaldean. Syrian) of Edessa*

## **WORLD ALLIANCE OF YMCA'S**

*It is with deep sadness that we receive the news that the Holy Father Pope John Paul II has just passed away. He was a great and inspiring figure of our times. He was a role model for millions of faithful not only of the Catholic and Christian faith, but also for people of many other faiths. He had a special place for the young people of our world and had inspired them with his life, dynamism and reflections. He had a great passion for the issues of our times, especially on those concerning justice and peace. On behalf of the World Alliance of YMCAs representing YMCAs in 125 countries of the world we extend our sincere*

condolences in these sad momenta. We also pray for his eternal rest in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DR. BART SHAHA  
Secretary General of the "World Alliance of YMCA's"

## **CONFERENZA CRISTIANA DELL'ASIA**

*We the participants of the 12th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (31 March-6 April 2005, Chiangmai, Thailand), representing 120 Christian Churches and Councils in Asia, were deeply saddened upon hearing the news of the demise of His Holiness Pope John Paul II on Saturday 2 April 2005. In this moment of great loss to the Roman Catholic community of Christians around the world, we want you to rest assured of our prayers, our condolences and our feelings of solidarity. We commend his spirit to the all-merciful and eternal God.*

*We recognize that during the years of his Pontificate, he proved himself to be a faithful friend of the ecumenical movement His Encyclical Ut Unum Sint gives Roman Catholics a strong theological basis for an irreversible commitment to ecumenism. This commitment has borne fruit in Asia in the close ties that the Christian Conference of Asia now enjoys with the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.*

*The Churches in Asia have been greatly encouraged by the prophetic stand of the late Holy Father against war and global poverty and his strong promotion of justice and the role of youth in shaping the world of today and tomorrow.*

*The theme of our Assembly is "Building Communities of Peace for All". As we deliberate on the relevance of this theme for our Asian Churches, we recall the heroic efforts of the late Pope to establish significant relations with communities of other faiths and to work for the healing in reconciliation of relationships damaged by conflicts and violence.*

CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA  
Presidents, Officers, Delegates, and Guests of the XII General Assembly

## **CHIESA AVVENTISTA DEL 7° GIORNO**

*The Council on Inter-Church Relations of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church wishes to express our sincere condolences on the death last Saturday of Pope John Paul II.*

*Though his death did not come unexpectedly, nevertheless the death of a respected international church leader is always an occasion of sadness and reflection on the transience of life. This is all the more the case, when the deceased leader is the spiritual father figure for hundreds of millions of Catholics and has occupied world ecclesiastical center stage for over a quarter of a century.*

BERT B. BEACH  
Seventh Day Adventist Church General Secretary Council on inter- Church\Faith Relations

## **CONSIGLIO METODISTA MONDIALE**

*It is with a mixture of sadness and joy that we join you to mourn the loss of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. The loss to the Christian world is comforted by the fact that he has fought the good fight, finished the course, and because he kept the faith, he has now gone on to his heavenly reward.*

*The World Methodist family is grateful to God for his life and the impact that Pope John Paul had in his lifetime. He was truly an inspiring leader. As the world has undergone tremendous changes in the last twenty-six years, he was a model leader who pioneered strong ecumenical relations. While there are no easy answers to these challenges with which he dealt, and while different Christian bodies have different views on the issues with which he dealt, he is appreciated for bringing a strong and highly Christian voice to bear on addressing these challenges.*

GEORGE H. FREEMAN  
*General Secretary World Methodist Council*

## **ESERCITO DELLA SALVEZZA**

*With the death of Pope John Paul II the world has lost a spiritual leader and statesman of towering stature. His courage in speaking for those who have no voice, his rock-like stand for the values in which he believed, and the tireless way in which he carried out his worldwide pastoral duties, have been an inspiration to millions. His life has left an indelible imprint on his era, and his achievements are historic.*

*Salvationists from around the world join with their Roman Catholic brothers and sisters in thanking and praising God for the life of Pope John Paul II, and pray that they may know the comfort of Christ in their hour of sorrow.*

*On behalf of The Salvation Army we therefore particularly pay tribute to His Holiness for the emphasis he gave during his Pontificate to ecumenical affairs and relationships with other Christian World Communions in continuing to implement the ecumenical commitment decisions of the Second Vatican Council. We recall that in his Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (25 May 1995), he declared that "the ecumenical task is 'one of the pastoral priorities' of my Pontificate" (n. 99), pointing to the importance of the Church being obedient to Christ's prayer that his disciples all be one (Jn 17:21) for effective evangelization of the world. He recognized differences of approach in the various Christian World Communions but stated that "the vision of full communion to be sought is that of unity in legitimate diversity" (n. 54). He confirmed Vatican II's teaching that "legitimate diversity is in no way opposed to the Church's unity, but rather enhances her splendour and contributes greatly to the fulfilment of her mission" (n. 50). We look forward to the further development of that "unity in legitimate diversity" in our relationship with the Catholic Church.*

EARL ROBINSON  
*Colonel, Secretary for International External Relations The Salvation Army*

## **ARCIVESCOVO DI CANTERBURY**

*On my own behalf as well as on behalf of the entire Anglican Communion, I write to offer my sincerest condolences on the death of His Holiness. Like countless others, I and my colleagues have felt a sense of personal bereavement in the loss of a truly great spiritual presence, whose witness to the Gospel in our world has been so consistently brave and powerful. My own personal memories of the visit to the Vatican in October 2003 are still warm, and my meeting with Pope John Paul was a profound experience. For both my wife and myself, it was altogether an unforgettable encounter, and it has given an added*

*dimension to the grief we share with all our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters around the world at this time. Please be sure of our continuing prayers here at Lambeth Palace for all our friends in Rome over the coming days. I look forward to meeting again soon, and meanwhile send my warmest greetings to you and all at the Pontifical Council.*

ROWEN WILLIAMS  
Archbishop of Canterbury

## **CHIESA ANGLICANA ESPISCOPIALIAN "ST. PAUL WITHIN THE WALLS" (ROME)**

*In this time of mourning and contemplation at the death of the Holy Father John Paul II, we send you our greetings and assure you of our thoughts and daily prayers. John Paul II has, both encouraged and been an example in our day of Godly ecumenical sensitivity and love, and was also an inspiration of interfaith tolerance and respect for all God's people, We join you in thanking our Lord God for his life and witness among us, and draw encouragement from the profound examples he has shown the world as Christ's Priest, Pastor and Pope.*

MICHAEL VONO  
Rector «St. Paul within the Walls» (Anglican Espiscop - Rome)

## **COMUNIONE ANGLICANA**

*During the Holy Father's last 24 hours 1,500 leaders of the Anglican Communion Network, both clergy and laity from 46 dioceses in 24 states, were meeting together in the greater Washington, D.C. area. All through our conference Pope Jhon Paul II was in our prayers, both public and private. The conference also asked that I communicate with the Holy See to express first, our prayerful support, and then, our deepest sympathies and assurance of our fraternal intercessions at the transistion ahead. Jhon Paul II was "our" Holy Father too. Orthodox Amglicans from all across the United States and Canada share in your sorrow at a great leader lost and in yourjoy at a life extraordinarily well-lived.*

ROBERT DUNCAN  
Moderator Anglican Communion Network Espiscopal Bishop of Pittsburgh

*On behalf of the Anglican Communion worldwide, I extend sympathy to our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Church as we join in mourning the death of Pope John Paul II.*

*Yet, at the same time, we also join people everywhere in thanking God for the long and remarkable ministry of this beloved Christian leader and pray God's blessing on the Roman Catholic Church as it seeks guidance in selecting a successor. Pope John Paul II's dedication to ecumenism was tireless and his relationships with three Archbishops of Canterbury, the late Lord Runcie, Lord Carey and Archbishop Rowan Williams, were marked by mutual care, affection and respect.*

THE REV. CANON KENNETH KEARON  
Secretary General of the Anglican Communion

*I write to assure you of my prayers and sympathy following the death of Pope John Paul II. I well remember the visit IARCCUM made to him during our first meeting in Rome and his keen interest in our work. I remember, too, his words as we were leaving; "come again". In Ut Unum Sint he showed a deep commitment to ecumenism.*

DAVID HIGHVELD

*Anglican co-chair of the international Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission*

## **TAVOLA VALDESE**

*Esprimiamo sentimenti di viva partecipazione al dolore per il compiersi della vita terrena del Pontefice Giovanni Paolo II. Di Giovanni Paolo II abbiamo ammirato la grande fede e la spiritualità con le quali ha testimoniato con parole ed atti l' Evangelo di Gesù Cristo. Muovendosi spesso al di sopra delle umane convenzioni, Egli ha contribuito far maturare, nei credenti cristiani di tutte le confessioni, la consapevolezza di appartenere all'Unica Chiesa Universale, chiamata ad abbattere tutte le barriere erette dagli uomini. Convinto che l'amore per Dio e per il prossimo non si esauriscono in vaghi sentimentalismi, ma esigono un incessante operare per la libertà, la pace e la giustizia, si è speso per il rispetto della dignità della persona umana creata ad immagine del Padre, senza particolari i per le potenze di questo mondo. Questo ha contribuito al proseguimento del dialogo ecumenico, ed a creare il clima nel quale sono maturate significative intese tra la Conferenza Episcopale e l'Unione delle Chiese Valdesi e Metodiste, come quella sui matrimoni misti e, recentemente, all'apertura di importanti confronti sull'uso pubblico dei comuni simboli cristiani. Nella consapevolezza che il cammino ecumenico è irreversibile, sebbene ancora irto d'ostacoli creati dalla umana infedeltà, siamo grati al Signore per avere donato alla Sua Chiesa un uomo che ha testimoniato con determinazione il mondo nuovo di Cristo.*

Past. GIANNI GENRE

*Moderatore della Tavola Valdese*

## **FEDERAZIONE DELLE CHIESE EVANGELICHE IN ITALIA**

*La Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia esprime - per il tramite della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana - la propria partecipazione al dolore dei cattolici del mondo, ed in particolare di quelli italiani. Scompare con Giovanni Paolo II una figura che ha segnato la storia. Vogliamo in questo momento ricordare con affetto la Sua intensa presenza nel dialogo ecumenico ed interreligioso. Tante sono state le "prime volte" che hanno caratterizzato questo pontificato. E molte di queste "prime volte" hanno contrassegnato i rapporti con le Chiese nate dalla Riforma: un Papa a Ginevra, un Papa che incontra i rappresentanti del protestantesimo italiano, un Papa che visita la comunità luterana di Roma. E' questo senso di novità che ha caratterizzato tutto il Suo così lungo pontificato. E noi abbiamo ricevuto queste primizie come un dono del Signore: "La, terra ha prodotto, il suo frutto; Dio, l'Iddio nostro, ci benedirà" (Salmo, 67, 13). Negli ultimi dolorosi mesi il sistema mediatico ci ha mostrato crudelmente le piaghe di un uomo malato. Ma Egli ha saputo darci, in questa occasione una testimonianza forte della sofferenza come parte*

necessaria della condizione umana, che va sempre vista alla luce dell'amore di Dio. Salutiamo in questo momento di tristezza le sorelle e i fratelli cattolici con le parole della promessa divina: "un'allegrezza eterna coronerà il loro capo; otterranno letizia, allegrezza, il dolore e il gemito fuggiranno" (Isaia 51. 11).

GIANNI LONG

Presidente della Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia

## ASSEMBLEA DEI RABBINI D'ITALIA

*Nella triste circostanza della morte di Giovanni Paolo II, desidero - a nome di tutti i Rabbini d'Italia - esprimere il cordoglio più profondo e l'espressione sincera dei nostri sentimenti di partecipazione e vicinanza. Giovanni Paolo II ha fatto moltissimo per il Dialogo Ebraico-Cristiano. Grazie a Lui, una storia secolare, fatta di polemiche e di contrapposizioni si è finalmente aperta verso l'incontro, la comprensione e la collaborazione nel segno del riconoscimento dei torti del passato e del bisogno di ricercare l'uomo, fatto a immagine divina e destinatario, quindi, di rispetto e amore. Esprimo l'augurio vivo che l'eredità spirituale e morale lasciata da Papa.*

*Wojtyła possa essere raccolta e ulteriormente sviluppata e portata avanti nell'interesse, non solo dei vicendevoli rapporti, ma di quelli dell'umanità tutta che ha sempre più bisogno di amore di pace.*

GIUSEPPE LARAS

Presidente

## GRAN RABBINATO DI FRANCIA

*L'humanité tout entière est en deuil: elle a en effet perdu le Pèlerin de la Paix, celui qui a consacré les longues années de son Pontificat à répandre autour de lui l'amour du prochain et la nécessité de vivre en pax entre frères humains, tous créés à l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu. Oui, l'humanité est en deuil: les catholiques bien sûr, qui ont perdu celui qui représentait l'âme de leur Eglise; les chrétiens qui pleurent la disparition de celui qui a tant œuvré pour l'oecuménisme; les juifs qui ont perdu un ami sincère, celui qui a osé agir et porter témoignage de cette amitié en se rendant à la synagogue de Rome - ce qu'aucun Pape n'avait fait avant lui - puis en pèlerinage à Yad Vashem et sur l'esplanade du Mur occidental à Jérusalem, dernier vestige du Second Temple, où il a placé dans les interstices du rocher sa prière de repentance; les musulmans qui se souviennent de son discours de Rabat aux accents prophétiques les adeptes de religion d'Extrême Orient qu'il a tenu à Assise avec les représentants des monothéismes; et surtout les millions d'êtres humains qui ne revendiquent aucune appartenance religieuse et qui sont sensibles aux valeurs, de paix, de fraternité, de justice et de concorde qu'il a prônées sans relâche tout au long de son Pontificat. Nous juifs, comme tous nos frères humains, ressentons le chagrin que constitue cette disparition et nous élevons nos prières vers le Tout-Puissant pour qu'il accueille ce Juste parmi toutes ses créatures qui ont œuvré dans le sens du bien, et de l'accomplissement de Sa volonté. J'éprouve personnellement une infinie tristesse face au rappel à Dieu de celui qui m'a si souvent témoigné son estime et avec lequel j'entretenais des liens de respectueuse amitié.*

RENE-SAMUEL SIRAT

Ancien Grand Rabbín de France

## **AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

*The American Jewish Committee profoundly mourns the passing of Pope John Paul II. He was the central figure of our times in the remarkable transformation in Catholic-Jewish relations in particular, and Christian-Jewish relations, in general. Pope John Paul II will be remembered throughout the world for his unparalleled religious leadership, his historic role in the collapse of communism, and as a universal voice of conscience in troubled times. The Jewish community also will remember him with particular affection - no Pope had ever given the degree of attention to Jewish communities worldwide or received Jewish leadership at the Vatican so readily and so extensively as did John Paul II. AJC, the leading international Jewish organization advancing interreligious understanding worldwide for more than half a century, had the privilege of engaging the Pope directly on countless occasions at the Vatican, and during his papacy, AJC and Catholic partners across the U.S. deepened relations for the common good. Pope John Paul II moved the initial revolution in Catholic-Jewish relations set in motion by the much admired Pope John XXIII at the Second Vatican Council into high gear. He was the first Pope ever to visit a synagogue; to honor the memory*

*of the victims of the Shoah (Holocaust) with a memorial concert in the Vatican; to establish full relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel; and to make an official visit to the State of Israel. His forceful condemnations of anti-Semitism as a sin against God and man were highlighted by the liturgy of repentance that he initiated on the eve of the millennium, asking forgiveness for sins committed by Christians against Jews down the ages - a text that he subsequently personally placed at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In his historic role in advancing dialogue between religions throughout the world, his contribution to Christian-Jewish reconciliation crowns his achievements. His memory will remain as a great blessing.*

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

## **COMUNITA' EBRAICA DI ROMA**

*"Dalle profondità ti ho chiamato o Signore, disponiti all'ascolto delle nostre suppliche". Con particolare gratitudine per l'impegno di Papa Giovanni Paolo II nella promozione dei rapporti tra cristiani ed ebrei, abbiamo pregato per la salute del Papa recandoci personalmente nell'ospedale dove era ricoverato, ci siamo nuovamente uniti in preghiera in Piazza S. Pietro la mattina del 2 aprile, abbiamo continuato a pregare prima della Sua scomparsa e proseguiamo a farlo per la Sua memoria con affetto.*

Dr. RICCARDO DI SEGNI  
Rabbino Capo

## **ORGANIZZAZIONI ISLAMICHE IN ITALIA**

*A nome delle Comunità e delle Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia, dei loro organi dirigenti e mio personale, voglio esprimere le più sentite condoglianze per la morte terrena di Giovanni Paolo II. La sua vita è stata testimonianza di impegno assoluto al servizio della sua Chiesa, della causa del dialogo tra gli uomini, i popoli e le culture. Nel suo infaticabile pellegrinaggio di apostolato e di pace particolarmente significative sono state le tappe in terra d'Islam, a Casablanca e a Damasco. In quelle occasioni le sue parole e i suoi gesti hanno avuto un enorme significato per i musulmani del mondo, essi ci hanno dato la speranza concreta che fosse possibile e praticabile una via di mutuo riconoscimento e di*

*intesa cordiale e, che il tempo dei reciproci anatemi fosse finito per sempre. Egli ha tracciato un cammino irreversibile sul quale cristiani e musulmani potranno camminare insieme nell'interesse della giustizia e della concordia universale.*

DACHAN MOHAMED NPUR  
*Presidente*

## **GRAN MUFTI DI RUSSIA**

*Il Papa è stato buono e bravo come Pastore. Ha avuto iniziative per la pace tra i popoli. Ringrazio per la Sua pazienza, la Sua serenità.*

MUCHCHAMEDGALI KHUZIN  
*Vicepresidente del Grande Mufti di Russia*

## **GRANDE IMAM DI AL-AZHAR**

*Il trapasso di Papa Giovanni Paolo II costituisce una grande perdita per la Chiesa e per il mondo musulmano, a causa degli ideali e valori che adornavano questa persona e del loro ruolo nel promuovere la verità e la pace, e nel rafforzare i rapporti di carità e di amicizia esistenti tra i popoli musulmani e quelli cristiani...Il Papa era un uomo di pace e un uomo di religione eccezionale...Noi apprezziamo le sue posizioni moderate che sono state a favore delle cause arabe in Palestina e in Iraq. Ci legavano sempre a lui rapporti di amicizia e di forte carità attraverso il dialogo islamo-cristiano tra al-Azhar e la Chiesa da quando l'ho incontrato quando venne in visita ad al-Azhar al-sharif il 24 febbraio 2001.*

*Grande Imam Dr MUHAMMAD SAYYED TANTAWI  
Sheikh of al-Azhar*

## **DALAI LAMA**

*Papa Giovanni Paolo II è stato uno delle più grandi guide spirituali del Ventesimo secolo. Desidero esprimere le più sentite condoglianze per la sua scomparsa. Allo stesso tempo, esprimo il più alto apprezzamento per i suoi straordinari sforzi per la pace mondiale e per accrescere la collaborazione fra le differenti religioni. Farò del mio meglio per portare a compimento il suo desiderio.*

IL DALAI LAMA