

International Tributes

From the vast world outpouring of tributes, we select a few that are especially significant:

Russian President Vladimir Putin called John Paul II “an exceptional, great man,” and emphasized that an “entire era is linked to his name,” that he was building “fairer international relations, and forming society on the principles of humanism and solidarity.” The strengthening of spiritual and moral principles in people’s lives earned him the boundless love of Catholics all over the world, and the deserved respect of hundred of millions of people from different religions and nationalities. “I am certain that the role of John Pual II in history and his spiritual and political legacy, are properly valued by mankind.” Putin also stressed that under this Pontiff, “bilateral relations between the Vatican and Russia were built and deepened.”

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami expressed his deep sorrow and described the Pope as “a man of philosophical contemplation and poetical creations.” He said that the Pontiff had carried out “an effort to make truth, justice, and peace [the world’s] overwhelming values.”

French political leader Jacques Cheminade, on behalf of the Schiller Institute, released this statement, “John Paul

Among Us,” on April 4:

The death of John Paul II is for us all a tragedy, and a star illuminating in the most intimate way our own lives.

A tragedy, because in these terrible moments of injustice which we endure on a world scale, and in the very fabric of our societies, his presence was a ray of hope and a source of courage. His loss is like the snuffing out of a beacon.

A tragedy—but also a star which gives light, because we inherit his fight against what he called the “structures of sin,” illumined by his encyclicals and in the name of the universal goal of human welfare. “Culture of life” and “civilization of love” must no longer be empty words repeated behind closed doors, but truths to which we must bear witness in the public square. Let us read and re-read *Laborem Exercens* or *Centesimus Annus* not with lukewarm agreement—but rather at the risk of transforming our lives.

This is why our obligation is more than ever to defend the cause of our fellow men everywhere and of shared development, having a heart to love our enemies, for if we hate them, we can never transform nor elevate them.

The repeated revelation of our physical limitations as mortal beings is all the more terrible when those who disappear are the human beings who have borne witness to the transcendent; however, it is also and above all the moment at which to us is transmitted their share in immortality.

May we remain ever faithful to him in thought and deed in the life of the City, in order to raise the word “politics” into the light of truth.