



The Holy See

VIEWING OF THE FILM "KAROL: A POPE WHO REMAINED A MAN"

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
AFTER VIEWING THE FILM ON JOHN PAUL II***

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Thursday, 30 March 2006*

*Your Eminences,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Presbyterate,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

While images of this interesting new presentation of John Paul II's Pontificate are still vivid in my mind and heart, I address my cordial thoughts to those who contributed to making this film entitled "*Karol: A Pope who Remained a Man*". This evening we relived the emotions we felt last May, when we saw the first part of the film in this same hall shortly after the beloved Pontiff passed away.

I am grateful to the director and scriptwriter, Giacomo Battiato, and to his collaborators who with wise skill have presented to us anew the most important events in the apostolic ministry of my venerable Predecessor; I address a heartfelt "thank you" to Piotr Adamczyk, the actor who in playing the lead role brought his face to life, as well as to the other actors; I would like to express sincere appreciation to Pietro Valsecchi, the producer, and to the directors of the Production companies, Taodue and Mediaset, who are present here.

The story of the beloved Pontiff's earthly life ends with this second part of the film. We heard again the initial appeal of his Pontificate, so frequently re-echoed in the course of the years: "Open wide the doors to Christ! Do not be afraid!". The motion pictures showed us a Pope in deep contact with God and, for this very reason, always sensitive to the expectations of others.

The film has made us think ideally of his Apostolic Journeys in every part of the world; it has given

us an opportunity to relive his Meetings with numerous people, with the great figures of this earth, simple citizens, illustrious personages and unknown people. Among them all his embrace with Mother Teresa of Calcutta deserves mention. She was linked to John Paul II by an intimate spiritual harmony.

Glued to the spot as though we were present, we heard once again the shots of the tragic attempt on his life in St Peter's Square on 13 May 1981. From it all emerged the figure of a tireless prophet of hope and peace, who trod the paths of the globe to communicate the Gospel to all. His vibrant words condemning the oppression of totalitarian regimes, homicidal violence and war spring to mind; words full of comfort and hope, to express closeness to the relatives of the victims of conflicts and dramatic attacks, such as the one on the Twin Towers in New York; words of courage and denunciation addressed to the consumer society and the culture of hedonism that simply seek to achieve material well-being, which cannot satisfy the human heart's deep expectations.

These are the sentiments that spontaneously well up in my heart this evening and which I wanted to share with you, dear brothers and sisters, by reviewing, with the help of this film's images, the phases of the unforgettable Pontificate of John Paul II. May the beloved Pontiff accompany us from on High and obtain for us from the Lord the grace to be, like him, ever faithful to our mission. My Blessing to all of you present here and to your loved ones.

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