

## The Legacy of Pope John Paul II and Ukraine<sup>1</sup>

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When Pope John Paul II died on 2 April 2005, half of the world's population knew no other pope. Those of us who lived during his tenure lived through the third-longest papacy in history. It was not just the length in years which made his papal ministry historic, but what he did with those years. I would like to share with you my recollections and reflections on the man and his achievements.

When I was ordained to the episcopacy on 25 May 1971, the Second Vatican Council had concluded just a short five-and-a-half years earlier. The whole vision of the Church was set forth in the inspired conciliar documents but the living-out of the teachings of the council still had to be done. It fell to me and the other bishops of the time to take these documents and put them into practice. While we bishops in America were struggling with new directions, Karol Wojtyła was doing the same as the archbishop of Krakow, Poland.

At this time, I was the auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainian Catholics, being mentored by Metropolitan-Archbishop Ambrose Senyshyn on how to be the ordinary or bishop of a diocese; John Cardinal Krol, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Philadelphia, also assisted me in this regard.

Cardinal Krol, a true son of Poland, was a close friend, fellow Slav, and staunch supporter of the peoples oppressed by communism. He would invite me to dinner at his residence and share with me the wisdom he developed in his many years

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<sup>1</sup> A lecture given in June 2005 at LaSalle University in Philadelphia.