

Today is the memorial of Pope Saint John Paul II.

Until his death in 2005 (9 years ago), he was the only pope many people knew. He was the second-longest reigning pope - second only to Pope Pius IX who served during the mid-1800s.

He visited 129 countries during his pontificate, and canonized 483 saints, and beatified 1,340 individuals.

He emphasized the universal call to holiness of all the baptized, a theme of Vatican II which is often overlooked.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us to be watchful and ready for His return. In Baptism and Confirmation, we have received the Holy Spirit to give us the graces we need to turn away from sin to embrace God's way of love, mercy, and holiness.

As we approach this altar to receive the sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, may we be empowered to persevere in holiness until we receive our eternal reward with God, Who is the source of all truth, beauty, goodness, love and everlasting life.