



A Life in Prayer: The Private Prayers of Pope John Paul II (v. 5)

Pope John Paul II

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In October 1978, Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, archbishop of Krakow, was elected Pope, taking the name John Paul II in honor of his predecessor, who died after just thirty-three days in office. John Paul II was a surprising choice: Not only was he relatively young, at fifty-eight, but he was also the first non-Italian to be elevated to the papacy for more than 450 years. Eight months later, Wojtyla returned to his native Poland as Pope, receiving a rapturous welcome from his fellow Poles, who were then still living under communism. This was the beginning of John Paul II's extraordinary engagement with the world--work that remade the Catholic Church and reached out to people of all faiths in every nation. Karol Wojtyla was born near Krakow in 1920. Having studied theology secretly during the German occupation, he was ordained a priest in 1946, becoming archbishop in 1964 and cardinal in 1967. Outspoken and often controversial, John Paul II became one of the best-known figures in the world as the Cold War drew to an end. The most traveled Pope there has been, he had visited 123 countries by his eightieth birthday. By his eighty-third birthday, in 2003, he had become the fourth-longest-serving Pope in history, having worked diligently to secure his theological legacy within the church. This volume demonstrates the breadth and depth of John Paul II's life and interests. "A Life in Prayer" collects prayers and public speeches from the four volumes of "The Private Prayers of Pope John Paul II." The selections illustrate his devotion to the Virgin Mary and the Rosary, the foundations of his spiritual life, the profound range of his compassion, and the poetry of his life and language. "A Life in Prayer" also includes extracts from Tad Szulc's biography of John Paul II that describe the key moments in Wojtyla's life. In 1994, John Paul II was named "Time" magazine's Person of the Year. The magazine said, "His power rests in the word, not the sword....He is an army of one, and his empire is both as ethereal and as ubiquitous as the soul."

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