

GRIEF FELT AROUND WORLD

"We all feel like orphans this evening."

Archbishop Leonardo Sandri
Vatican's undersecretary of state

"Quite apart from his role as a spiritual guide to more than a billion men, women and children, he was a tireless advocate of peace, a true pioneer in interfaith dialogue and a strong force for critical self-evaluation by the church itself."

Kofi Annan
U.N. secretary-general

"Throughout a hard and often difficult life, he stood for social justice and on the side of the oppressed, whether as a young man facing the Nazi occupation in Poland or later in challenging the communist regime. He never wavered, never flinched, in the struggle for what he thought was good and right."

Tony Blair
British prime minister

"He promoted interfaith understanding and dialogue, with a willingness to address the past, and a profound determination to build a future of understanding and brotherhood between all faiths."

Silvan Shalom
Israeli foreign minister

"The death today of His Holiness Pope John Paul II saddens the church. His leadership of the Catholic Church for more than a quarter of a century impacted the whole world; and the world now mourns the loss of this man of God whose spirit and devotion, even in the face of frail health, exemplified Jesus Christ's own love for the church."

Cardinal Francis George
archbishop of Chicago

"Pope John Paul was a healer and a beacon of light around the world advocating for the poor, the oppressed and the unborn. He was and continues to be an inspiration to not only the 1 billion members of the Catholic Church but also to all other people of faith around the world. Because of his work, the world is left a better place."

House Speaker Dennis Hastert
Illinois Republican

People of many faiths reflect on emotional day

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Mourners flooded the streets of Warsaw on Saturday carrying flowers and lighting candles following the death of Pope John Paul II in an outpouring of grief and admiration that was repeated around the world.

World leaders and people from every continent and many faiths found something in the life of the pope to praise: His inspiration for the resistance to communism in his Polish homeland; support for better relations with Muslims and Jews; or championing the cause of the poor.

Feelings were intense in Poland, where the Church of St. Anne in the heart of the capital could not hold all those wanting to pay their respects to the Polish-born pontiff. Several thousand knelt outside in prayer.

"These are tears of joy," seamstress Iolanta Szarkowicz said as she wept. "The pope did all that he could for Poland. He brought God back to communist Poland, and then the feeling of freedom."

Bells tolled worldwide after the announcement that the pope had died Saturday, ending a long struggle against debilitating illness.

In Paris, the bells of Notre Dame Cathedral sounded 84 times — once for each year of the pontiff's life.

Although his death had been widely expected since a recent series of medical problems, the passing of the pontiff after 26 years at the helm of the Roman Catholic Church overwhelmed many of the faithful.

At St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, Austria, worshippers dropped to their knees and wept when news of the death was announced as hundreds of candles flickered.

At the Cathedral of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, Olga Sanchez, 42, knelt on a pew and wept softly into a handkerchief. Sanchez said she was cured of chronic stomach ailments after attending John Paul's Mass during his 1984 visit to her country.

"I'm completely sure he was a saint," Sanchez said.

Zora Valcic, a 54-year-old saleswoman from the northwest city of Pula, Croatia, couldn't hold back her tears. A blessing she received from him at the Vatican "made my life so much fuller and nicer. I'll be eternally grateful for that."

World leaders echoed the admiration.

"The Catholic Church has lost its shepherd. The world has lost a champion of human freedom," President Bush said in a brief televised statement from the White House, with his wife, Laura, at his side.

Colombian President Alvaro Uribe declared a period of national mourning and ordered flags across the country to fly at half staff. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva declared seven days of national mourning.

French President Jacques Chirac said history "will retain the imprint and the memory of



AP



AP

Above, worshippers console one another Saturday in Warsaw, Poland, after learning of Pope John Paul II's death. At left, President Bush greets Cardinal Theodore McCarrick as first lady Laura Bush looks on Saturday after a Mass at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington.

this exceptional sovereign pontiff," while British Prime Minister Tony Blair said John Paul "never wavered, never flinched, in the struggle for what he thought was good and right."

More than just a spiritual guide, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the pope "was a tireless advocate of peace, a true pioneer in interfaith dialogue and a strong force for critical self-evaluation by the Church itself."

Even in communist Cuba, Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque hastily called a news conference to express "profound sorrow" and fondly recall the pope's visit to the island seven years ago.

Praise for John Paul II tran-

sceded religious boundaries.

"He promoted inter-faith understanding and dialogue, with a willingness to address the past, and a profound determination to build a future of understanding and brotherhood between all faiths," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said the pope will be remembered "as a distinguished religious figure, who devoted his life to defending the values of peace, freedom and equality." Palestinian militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad also expressed their sorrow.

Even Spain's ruling Socialist party, which clashed with the

pontiff over gay marriage, abortion and divorce, issued a statement calling his death a loss for Catholics and the international community, saying he "was one of the most important historical figures of the 20th century."

Kneeling in a pew facing a large picture of Pope John Paul II surrounded by tall white candles and flowers in the San Juan Cathedral in Puerto Rico, 23-year-old bakery worker Fabiola Quezada clasped her hand and moved her lips in silent, fervent prayer.

"He's the only pope I've known, he's been my father through difficult times, the next one may be a great man, but it won't be the same for me," she said.

Area's religious leaders share Catholic world's loss of the pope

By JAYNE MATTHEWS
News-Democrat

The most-traveled pope in history left his mark on people of all faiths, spokesmen for metro-east Jews, Muslims and Protestants said Saturday after the death of John Paul II.

"It is a great loss," said Mohammed Kibria, president of the Muslim mosque at Swansea's Masjid Islamic Center.

John Paul II made a public plea for understanding and tolerance among the world's religions after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C.

"He was a man of peace, and he tried to bring about peace all over the world," said Kibria, a psychologist who attended a Catholic college in Bangladesh.

The pope also was known for addressing some of the historical wrongs done in the name of the church in the past, and for the failure of some Christians to do more to speak out against the Holocaust in World War II.

Some of the worst atrocities done by Hitler and the Nazis took place in the pope's native Poland, where millions died in concentration camps and in Nazi raids on Jewish neighborhoods.

"It meant a lot to be acknowledged," said Emily Martinez of Mascoutah, president of Agudas Achim-Beth Israel synagogue in Belleville.

"It's a loss to the world. He was a great leader," she said.

The Rev. James Harrell of Granite City said his strongest impression of John Paul II came during the ailing pope's last appearance at his apartment window to give his weekly blessing to those gathered below in St. Peter Square.

"Something that was really heart-moving was when he couldn't speak and gave the sign of the cross. That was what I'll remember about him, his determination to serve the people of the church," said Harrell, pastor of Metro-East Worship Center and president of United Congregations of Metro East.

"He was a man of peace, and he tried to bring about peace all over the world."

Mohammed Kibria, president of the Muslim mosque at Swansea's Masjid Islamic Center

Pope's commitment to poor impressed Catholic director

By RAMONA CURTIS
News-Democrat

Pope John Paul II's commitment to service the poor left a big impression on Catholic Urban Programs director Joe Hubbard.

"His stance on human life and his stance on caring for those who are broken and hurting and his stance on peace have been real wonderful," Hubbard said Saturday.

Hubbard, 62, has for 32 years been working for Catholic Urban Programs, an East St. Louis service agency that provides food, clothing and shelter assistance. He is also the president of the local St. Vincent DePaul Society.

But it wasn't just the things that Pope John Paul II stood for that inspired Hubbard's commitment to the

Americans mark the death of Pope John Paul II

Associated Press

Quietly at home, or with heads bowed in church, Americans marked the death Saturday of Pope John Paul II, recalling him as a great leader who combined warmth with moral power, a call to care for the poor with an emphasis on liberty.

Bells tolled at Roman Catholic churches across the nation, as they did at the Vatican and around the world. Religious leaders of all faiths spoke out to honor the pope, as did political leaders. Flags were lowered to half-staff; black bows replaced Easter wreaths at a Wisconsin cathedral.

"We will always remember the humble, wise and fearless priest who became one of history's great moral leaders," said President Bush, who singled out John Paul's praise for the U.S. Constitution. "All popes belong to the world, but Americans had special reasons to love the man from Krakow."

Many mourners reflected on John Paul's long suffering and graceful acceptance of death. Others looked to the Polish-born pope's clear-voiced denunciation of communism. And others remembered his conservative church doctrine, some gratefully and others not.

In downtown Boston, a sign posted on the door at the St. Anthony Shrine announced his death.

"I think his journey through suffering is complete. I'm proud, as a Catholic, of the way he died. He was a model of how to die with dignity," said Christine Hall, a 25-year-old teacher coming to church for confession. "He was surrounded by his loved ones at his home."

New York's Cardinal Edward Egan remembered the pope as someone who lived his life following the church's teaching, citing how John Paul forgave the man who shot and almost killed him in 1981.

"He lived his life as his savior lived his," Egan said while celebrating Mass on Saturday evening. "Now he has died, as the Lord did, so that he might be gathered into the arms of his Father in heaven as the Lord was gathered."

After a Mass in Washington at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Lisa Jenkins of Orlando, Fla., offered her hopes for the future: "It's a sad day. I'm praying for the world to open its eyes for what he stood for — peace, morality and more."

People of different religious backgrounds and viewpoints all found ways to praise John Paul, whether for his efforts to unite people, his opposition to abortion or his stance on world politics.

The Rev. Billy Graham, the world's best-known Protestant, said John Paul "was unquestionably the most influential voice for morality and peace in the world during the last 100 years.... He was convinced that the complex problems of our world are ultimately moral and spiritual in nature, and only Christ can set us free from the shackles of sin and greed and violence."

poor. It was the pope's actions as well.

"In seeing him struggle day after day with not only his physical illness but in being shot and all the other things, he tries to remain positive with the all the negative things in the church and the world," Hubbard said. "He tries to keep a positive attitude that we can change the world and make it a better place to live."

Hubbard received the Lumen Christi Award from the pope in 2002 for his efforts to make the world a better place to live.

"It's an actual medal with the papal colors on it," said Hubbard. "He gave it to several lay people in our diocese who did outstanding things in our diocese to keep the church alive."