

Pope Paul VI

CHRISTIAN VALUES AND VIRTUES

Pope Paul VI

Edited by Karl A. Schultz

**A Crossroad Book
The Crossroad Publishing Company
New York**

CONTENTS

1. The Life and Legacy of Pope Paul VI (Giovanni Battista Montini)
2. A Personal Word about Pope Paul VI
3. A Short Course on *Lectio Divina*
 4. The Art of Dialogue
 5. Peace
 6. Faith
 7. Hope
 8. Love
 9. Chastity
 10. Human Development
 11. Suffering
 12. Humility
 13. Joy
 14. Evangelization

Suggested Resources

Acknowledgments (TK)

About the Editor

A Word from the Publisher (TK)

The Life and Legacy of Pope Paul VI (Giovanni Battista Montini)

Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini was born on September 26, 1897 into a prominent and devout Catholic family. He was a precocious youth who exhibited many of the qualities that would characterize his adult life: a remarkable memory, an elusive reserve often mistaken as coldness, a natural and developed ability as a writer and word smith --- "he spoke with the dictionary," a devoted student, an admirer of culture and literature, and a lack of enthusiasm for superficial pursuits. He was sickly for much of his youth, and there was concern that his ill health would interfere with his priestly ministry.

His father, Giorgio, was a prominent Italian lawyer, publisher, and activist. His mother, Giuditta, was extensively involved in Catholic social work and activism. His elder brother was an attorney and politician, his younger brother a doctor. He grew up in a staunchly Catholic province in Italy called Brescia.

Giovanni Montini was ordained a priest on May 19, 1920. His pre-diplomatic priestly service left him with a great understanding and affection for workers, youth, and the poor. In tandem with Monsignor Domenico Tardini he operated as Pope Pius XII's Secretary of State from 1939 through 1954, when he became Archbishop of Milan. He was made a cardinal by Pope John XXIII in 1958, and became pope on June 21, 1963.

Pau's Papacy

Pope Paul guided the Roman Catholic Church through a tumultuous time in its history. His predecessor, John XXIII, had called an ecumenical council (Vatican Council II, 1962-1965) for the purpose of modernizing and redefining the Church, but died in the middle of it. Paul helped set the stage for Vatican Council II with his October 18, 1962 letter to Amleto Cicognani, Secretary of State to Pope John XXIII, and was elected as a candidate who was thought capable of keeping the Council from spinning out of control while reconciling conservative and progressive forces within the Church. Paul guided the Council to its completion and made numerous though largely unpublicized contributions.

Paul mostly succeeded in implementing the Council. Although many priests, religious, and lay persons left the Church in the wake of the shock, disillusion, miscommunication, and aberrations that accompanied the post-conciliar transition, no major schisms occurred, and the Church regained touch with the modern world. Paul's ability to preserve the Church's integrity, tradition, and unity amid tumultuous change and conflict is testimony to his skills as a diplomat and administrator.

One of the most impressive pastoral dimensions of Paul's papacy was his compassion for Catholics who were unable to live up to their vows as a priest, nun, or married person. Paul decentralized the annulment process by granting authority to local marriage tribunals, and simplified the process for laicizing priests and nuns. He implemented these pastoral policies while affirming the ideals and responsibilities underlying these vocational commitments and encouraging individuals to fulfill them.

As Peter Hebblethwaite points out in *Paul VI* (Paulist Press, 1993, p. 441), "Some said that if Pope John's key word was *aggiornamento* (updating), Paul's motto was *avvicinamento*, coming closer to people. He had found a new way to address all people of good will."

Little Known Facts About Paul VI

!He studied for the priesthood from home, became Archbishop without ever serving as a parish priest, and though not yet a Cardinal was seriously considered for the papacy in 1958.

! He was known as the Pilgrim Pope because of his extensive travels. He broke with the Papal precedent of staying inside Italy and traveled to Africa, India, the Holy Land, Australia, South America, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and America. He was the first reigning pope to visit America.

! Paul's firm but non-confrontational policy of dialogue and negotiation with the iron curtain countries --- seeking religious freedom concessions whenever possible --- referred to as *Ostpolitik* or East politics, created a foundation from which Pope John Paul II would help bring down Communism in Eastern Europe.

! Always sensitive to cultural considerations, in 1966 Paul released Catholics from the obligation of refraining from meat on Fridays (except in Lent) providing that they substitute an appropriate means of fasting and asceticism in recollection of the Lord's death on Good Friday. Sadly, few paid attention beyond his retraction of the meat prohibition.

! Paul helped reduce hostilities during the Viet Nam War by bringing the parties to the negotiating table for the Paris Peace Talks in 1968.¹

! In 1970, Paul survived an assassination attempt at the Manila airport by Benjamin Mendoza y Amor, a deranged Bolivian known locally as "the mad painter". Mendoza attacked Paul with a foot long double-edged knife, but was thwarted by Paul's secretary, Don Pasquale Macchi and Bishop Galvin of Singapore. Like John Paul II, Paul VI immediately forgave his attacker.²

Sadly, Monsignor Macchi, who was with Paul at his deathbed and was executor of his estate, passed away on April 5, 2006. Monsignor Macchi was gracious enough to send me a letter of support and an offer of assistance along with a copy of a book on Paul VI that he published in Italian in 2001.

Paul's Times

Pope Paul VI helped shape his and our era. Recall what was going on in the world at the time of his pontificate (1963-78):

- 1)The assassinations of President Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro.
- 2) The expansion of the women's and civil rights movements with the goal of equal rights.
- 3) The Viet Nam conflict.
- 4) Watergate.
- 5) The energy crisis.
- 6) Several middle eastern wars and continuous unrest.
- 7) The heightening of the arms race and oppressive policies of the Soviet Union.
- 8) China's increased engagement in diplomatic and trade relations with the west.
- 9) The murder of the Israeli hostages at the 1972 Olympics.
- 10) The rise of the youth culture highlighted in the media by the soaring popularity of the Beatles that coincided approximately with the death of President Kennedy.

¹ Ibid, pp. 505-513.

² Ibid, pp. 568-569.

Paul's Signature Contributions

John Paul II deservedly receives much credit for his innovative teachings in the area of sexuality and married life. His "theology of the body" continues to be the subject of much reflection, application, and study at all levels of the Church. Paul VI has three such trademark contributions, in the areas of communications, evangelization, and human development and spirituality. His teachings span the beginning and end of his pontificate, and are a significant part of his papal charter and legacy.

Paul's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* ("Paths of the Church", August 6, 1964), is a treatise on the art of dialogue and communications. It deals with both internal and external relations --- within the Church and with the world, the sacred and the secular realms. His final pastoral letter, the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* ("On Evangelization in the Modern World", December 8, 1975), places dialogue in the context of the primary mission of the Church, that of spreading the good news, and links conversion to evangelization. Communication and conversion must go together in order to avoid ego blockages; selfishness is the enemy of solidarity.

Paul's watershed encyclical *Populorum Progressio* ("On the Development of Peoples", March 26, 1967) not only changed the face and direction of Catholic social teaching, but made a significant contribution to global socio-economic policy considerations. Economists, social activists, and politicians took note of Paul's masterpiece because it was original and articulated in a comprehensible and non-partisan manner. In 1965, Paul also composed a beautiful reflection on life and its possibilities as part of his last will and testament. This essay is found in the Human Development chapter.

Paul built upon *Populorum Progressio* with *Octogesima Adveniens* ("A Call to Action", May 14, 1971), an Apostolic Letter that developed the insights of *Populorum Progressio* while recognizing the diversity of cultural situations and the importance of local adaptations.

Paul's second to last Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete in Domini* ("On Christian Joy", May 9, 1975), focused on the spirituality necessary for human fulfillment and development, and his last major public address, a prayer offered at the funeral of Paul's old friend, Aldo Moro (the former Italian prime minister and then leader of the Christian Democratic Party who was abducted and assassinated by the terrorist group The Red Brigades) bewailed the mystery of suffering, which paradoxically constitutes both the greatest obstacle and impetus to faith, fulfillment, and development. Paul's exhortations, insights, and compassion can help it be the latter for us.

Paul was actively involved in the attempted negotiations to free Aldo Moro from his kidnappers, and even offered to exchange himself for the hostage. His prayer at the funeral mass for Aldo Moro constitutes a modern psalm, an affirmation of faith and hope amid an outcry of grief and disappointment. Paul's lament consoled and united, if only temporarily, the grief-stricken and divided nation of Italy, just as he had united the Church amid a divisive period. It showcased his ability to balance and articulate the depths of life's joys and sorrows, and to emerge praising God and comforting his people.

Paul's words can inspire us to voice our own grievances and sorrows in a spirit of trust in providence, an attitude that is at the core of potential fulfillment from a Christian standpoint --- to unite our sufferings with Christ's and thereby contribute to the salvation of the world through participation in Jesus' redemptive death (cf. Col 1:24).

Though moving and profound, Paul's prayer has always been rather obscure --- I have never seen it in print other than in the Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, when it reported the event in May, 1978. Because it effectively serves as Paul's public goodbye, I have chosen to include it as the final meditation in the book. It complements his final private message, the excerpt from his last will and testament, which is presented in the Human Development chapter.

Paul's potential fulfillment journey spanned his whole life. His sickly childhood and strict upbringing provided him with a sense of the importance of efficiency and effectiveness. As Pius XII's pro-Secretary of State, he advocated time cards in the curia, more responsible use of long distance telephone calls, and punctuality. Although Paul worked long hours, over-committed himself, and invariably fell behind schedule, he never rushed his appointments, always giving them his undivided attention. His full life enabled him to offer insights into the spirituality of time management, a rather unusual topic for a pontiff.

Paul's insights into joy and human development are so numerous, instructive, and inspiring that together with chastity, a subject on which he was particularly prophetic and pastoral, they constitute the longest chapters in the book.

Paul and His Protégé

So much has been communicated about Pope John Paul II that we would be remiss if we did not highlight some of the congruities and contrasts between the two pontiffs. John Paul II practiced Paul's communication and development initiatives through his international trips, criticisms of oppressive capitalist practices and structures, and advocacy for third world nations.

We also observe an interesting parallel in the way both pontiffs dealt with suffering. John Paul wrote a magnificent Apostolic Letter on it, *Salvifici Doloris* ("On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering", February 11, 1984), and showed how to suffer with dignity through his various illnesses and debilitations, ranging from an assassination attempt to a broken hip suffered during a bathtub mishap to Parkinson's to his final public appearances where his great pain was obvious to all.

Paul VI's approach to suffering was more behind the scenes and subtle. Particularly early in his pontificate he offered insightful and compassionate reflections on suffering to audiences of sick and disabled persons. Paul's final days were much less public than John Paul II's, though his agony, particularly on an emotional and spiritual level, was no less. The Suffering chapter contains some of Paul's most profound and inspirational reflections on the subject.

On the Obscure Pope

In the military, the "poop" is a term for a concise summary of relevant information. In civilian terms, we know it as the "scoop." In the media, a "scoop" is a disclosure not commonly or previously available. I am going to share my version of these, a gem from the *sensus fidelium*, an oft-abused but nonetheless legitimate term for the sense of the faithful, the spiritual intuitions of the people of God (a Vatican II expression that has progressively been de-emphasized in magisterial writings due to evolving theological perspectives).

This assertion is something that I have discussed with a number of well-informed Catholics old enough to remember Paul VI. I have dialogued on Paul VI throughout the United States and Europe with theologians, biblical scholars, professors, priests, sisters, and laypersons. A consistent undercurrent in our conversations has been the obscured greatness of Paul VI and his papacy.

Paul's press and public image may have been sub par, but when you consider the effects of his words and actions on the Church and world during his fifteen year pontificate, particularly amid the obstacles and challenges he faced, a simple and credible assertion emerges.

With the passage of time and the re-evaluation of historians, Paul VI will undergo a rehabilitation and be remembered not only as a mystic and prophet, which he is regarded as now, but as a great pope who arguably had more influence over modern Catholicism than any other pontiff. Paul oversaw more fundamental changes than any other pope, and despite many conflicts and controversies, somehow managed to hold the Church together without repressing the Spirit or the faithful

There is a sentiment among many in the Church that John Paul II deserves not only canonization but also the title "the Great," which has only been accorded twice, to Gregory I and Leo I. There are proceedings in the works to canonize John XXIII, who is currently entitled "blessed." In my opinion, eventually Paul VI will be accorded the former title and will remain deserving though deprived of the latter.

Traditionally a pope is identified as great by acclaim of the people. Because he was never a favorite of the masses, I don't envision a popular movement to honor the shy pontiff. However, with the passage of time the wisdom of Paul's decisions, initiatives (e.g., in the area of ecumenical relations), and the precedents he set (e.g., naming the first two female doctors of the Church, Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena) and the prophetic nature of his gestures and words will become more apparent to the faithful. I hope that a pope influenced by Paul's wisdom and spirit will accord him his rightful accolades and redirect the Church's attention to his words and deeds. Where that will lead only God knows, but the dissemination of his teachings and example can only do good.

Paul VI in Papal Context

The admirable character and legacy of John XXIII and John Paul II is almost universally acknowledged in both religious and secular circles. Their contributions, holiness, and charismatic personalities are well documented. How does Paul VI fit in with them, and in what way do significant differences between them shed light on contemporary circumstances?

A whole book could address this question, but lacking such space we will focus on two points of significant relevance to both the Church and individual readers.

Although it is unpopular and almost heretical to acknowledge any deficiencies, however minor, in the pontificates of John XXIII or John Paul II, we can appreciate them better if we also recognize their shortcomings. In each case it involves Church administration, an area in which Paul VI was significantly more prepared due to his long-time service in the Vatican.

Every pope and his administration has strengths and weaknesses. From Peter onward, God has used poor human instruments to guide His Church, a testimony to grace and the ongoing presence of the Spirit.

John XXIII

Just as Paul VI has been misunderstood, so has John XXIII. The popular perception of him as a radical progressive is inaccurate. A savvy Church historian, John was not about to be swept away by every theological, pastoral, or cultural current. His good will, common sense, and receptivity to the Spirit moved him to initiate reform in the Church, but he was not regarded as theologically liberal. He was elected pope because he was perceived as someone who would not

initiate a considerable amount of change and who would not occupy the position as long as Pius XII. The same logic may underlie Benedict XVI's succession of John Paul II.

Towards the end of the pontificate of Pius XII and continuing during John's, the methods and teachings of some of the leading Catholic biblical scholars in Rome were attacked by reactionaries who wished to roll back the openness to biblical studies inaugurated by Pius XII in his landmark, September 30, 1943, encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* ("On Promoting Biblical Studies"). Max Zerwick and Stanislaw Lyonnet, two prominent professors at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, were relieved of their teaching responsibilities for a year.

The doctrinal arm of the Vatican, then known as "The Holy Office" (during Paul's pontificate renamed "The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith") issued a warning in 1961 about ideas that questioned "the genuine historical and objective truth of Scripture". No biblical scholar himself, John XXIII did not act swiftly to counter this atmosphere of suspicion and repression.

The precise, technical nature of the subject, the conservatism of even kindly-disposed church officials still adjusting to the Church's new position on the Bible, and the relative ignorance of the general public about modern biblical studies made scholars an easy mark for detractors wishing to publicly distort their record in order to advance a reactionary agenda.

John's age, illness, and the influence of conservative officials in and surrounding the Curia could not keep him from drawing the line on a crucial issue. In one of the most important papal interventions at the Council (cited approvingly by a Protestant observer as evidence of the need for a pope!) he sided with critics of the regressive initial draft of the Vatican II document on the Bible and ordered it to be rewritten by a reconstituted commission.

Paul and Progress on the Bible

"But above all, the Church's spirituality will come forth enriched and nourished by the faithful reading of Sacred Scripture, of the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church and by all that brings about in the Church such an awareness. We mean systematic and accurate instruction, participation in that incomparable school of words, signs and divine inspirations which constitute the Sacred Liturgy and by silent and fervent meditation on divine truths and finally by wholehearted dedication to contemplative prayer". (Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (Paths of the Church), August 6, 1964)

When Paul became pope, such repression came to a swift end. The aforementioned were restored to their teaching responsibilities and a progressive, well-received document on the Bible was published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission. "On the Historical Truth of the Gospels" (April 21, 1964) paved the way for the Vatican II document on the Bible, *Dei Verbum*, "The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation", which after tumultuous debate over a three year period was passed just prior to the end of the council with only eight dissenting votes.

On a related note, one of Paul VI's less publicized initiatives was the creation of the Catholic Bible Federation in 1969 through the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Pivotal in its establishment was the coordinating efforts of its president, Augustin Cardinal Bea, former professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute and among the most prominent and respected Catholic biblical scholars in the world at the time.

Bea contacted Catholic Biblical Associations throughout the world in an effort to implement the recommendations of *Dei Verbum*. His appointment by Pope John XXIII as leader of the aforementioned Secretariat while in his late seventies underscores the direct link between the Bible's role in the Church and ecumenism.

The Catholic Bible Federation focuses on the promotion of the Bible in the Church in the different cultural milieus in which it is encountered, and seeks to integrate pastoral, contemplative, and critical (study) perspectives. Due in part to the influence of Cardinal Martini, it has published numerous articles on *lectio divina* (holistic reading and praying of inspired texts, pre-eminently the Bible) in its journal, *Bulletin Dei Verbum*.

From September 14-18, 2005, together with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity the Catholic Bible Federation held an International Congress at the Vatican in celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the promulgation of *Dei Verbum*. Two of the Church's most learned and influential Cardinals, Walter Kasper and Carlo Martini, S.J., presented detailed papers on the evolution and current status of the Bible in the Church, and numerous bishops, educators, and scholars spoke or presented papers.

One of the clear legacies of these events is the growth of *lectio divina* (the prayerful reading of the Bible and other spiritual texts) in the worldwide Church. Included in this book is material on how to apply the principles of *lectio divina* to this text for your own edification.

Contemporary Conservatism

As in the case of Pius XII and Paul VI, towards the end of the long pontificate of John Paul II an accentuated conservatism evolved. This is understandable on a human as well as organizational level. As our end comes into sight, it is natural to seek to preserve the equilibrium and progress we have attained by preventing contrary influences from making further inroads. Scars we incur make us wary of further wounds, inclining us to circle the wagons in a defensive posture.

In the case of John Paul II, his globetrotting, growing conservatism (compare his earlier and later writings), and comparative lack of enthusiasm for Church administration resulted in a trend of Episcopal (bishops) appointments more characterized by unquestioned orthodoxy, loyalty to Rome, and administrative competence than by charismatic leadership and enthusiastic support of Vatican II reforms. This is not to criticize the choices or agenda, but to identify what seem to be operative objectives. Of course, a pope is dependent on his subordinates for the information that he receives, so it is not just a matter of papal preferences and discretion.

Many of the bishops and especially archbishops appointed during the middle to latter years of John Paul's pontificate operate more like CEO's than spiritual leaders --- in part out of necessity, given financial constraints, the priest shortage, the litigious climate, and the increasingly anti-Catholic sentiment of the culture and media.

With respect to American appointees, in a few cases their political conservatism (identifiable in part by their implicit support of the Bush administration and muted criticism of the Iraq war, related human rights offenses, and regressive tax and fiscal policies) is in tension with positions espoused in the landmark documents issued by the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference in the 1980's, 1983's "*The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*" and 1986's "*Economic Justice for All*." In the mid-1980's, there was considerable tension between the Reagan Administration and the U.S. Bishops Conference, such that the former lobbied the latter to tone down the language or even withhold publishing the 1983 document.

Paul the Administrator

One of the most overlooked strengths of Paul's pontificate was his administration of the Church. Paul was very good at appointing suitable persons to positions of leadership and

responsibility within the Church, and did not immediately rein them in when they diverted from his expectations.

For example, he supported Cardinal Suenens' advocacy of the Charismatic movement and tolerated his manipulation of the media and occasional criticisms because he recognized his sincerity and loyalty. Paul VI elevated to archbishop and Cardinal status the last three popes, so he certainly recognized quality when he saw it.

During the papal transitions of 1978, I remember reading articles speculating on possible successors to Paul and John Paul I. Independent of their unquestioned orthodoxy, what impressed me about the list of *papabile* in 1978 was their dynamism and diversity. So many Cardinals from that time period, even those too old to be in the running, were prominent for their charisms and contributions to the Church: Suenens, Konig, Baggio, Benelli, Pignedoli, Alfrink, Casaroli, Spellman, Wright, and Villot are just a few that come to mind.

Because Paul did not travel as much as John Paul II, he had more time to attend to the administration of the Church, and his reform of the Curia and willingness to delegate and decentralize resulted in a comparatively competent bureaucracy. Like any pope, Paul inherited and carried a significant amount of "dead wood" in the Vatican, and he was both compassionate and prudent in his cultivation of a more effective organization.

Because of his age and administrative competence, and perhaps as a balance to John Paul II, Benedict seems to be more focused on organizational matters. His voluminous publications during his term as President of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith attests to his considerable writing and organizational skills.

In summary, Paul was an important component of the blessed papacies of the late twentieth century. He was an intuitive prophet, student of human nature, and competent administrator, a person in touch with the signs and spirit of the times --- he devoted practically an entire papal audience, April 16, 1969, to the latter --- and a spiritual leader adept at managing the tension between progress and fidelity to tradition. Reflection on his teachings in the concrete circumstances of our life can help us emulate his balancing tendencies in our polarized world.

About Pope Paul VI

To Cardinal Lercaro, as he knelt before Paul in congratulation of his election as pope: "so that is the way life goes, your eminence, you should really be sitting here now."

Pope John XXIII (in response to a question put to him at a meeting of academics on the Isola San Giorgio): "If Montini were a cardinal, I would have no hesitation in voting for him at the conclave."

"I have neither the "wisdom of the heart" of Pope John nor the preparation and culture of Pope Paul, but I am in their place." (Pope John Paul I)

"We wish to pursue with patience but firmness that serene and constructive dialogue that Paul VI had at the base of his plan and program for pastoral action. The principle theme for this was set forth in his great encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, namely, that men, as men, should know one another, even those who do not share our faith." (Pope John Paul I)

"I was constantly amazed at his profound wisdom and his courage and also by his constancy and patience in the difficult postconciliar period of his pontificate. As helmsman of the Church, the

bark of Peter, he knew how to preserve a providential tranquility and balance in even the most critical moments, when the Church seemed to be shaken from within, and he always maintained unhesitating hope in the Church's solidity." (Pope John Paul II)

"in the course of his life he was not always understood. He had his cross, bore 'insults' and was 'spat upon' ...Love is therefore an act of reparation to his memory." (Pope John Paul II)

The gigantic figure (la figura gigantesca) of this great pope taught us --- at a difficult period in the life of the church and through a daily martyrdom of worry and work --- what it really means to love and serve Christ and souls." (Pope John Paul II)

"Having lived with John Paul II and having listened to him publicly and privately, I must say that you could never get two popes who were as close in their thinking as Paul VI and John Paul II." (Fr. (now Bishop) John Magee, former English-language secretary to both popes)

Pope Paul on Pope Paul

The scene is history, our own history, our own time, today, in which we are looking for "the signs of the times". It is an uneven scene, for it is full of light and darkness, and is devastated by the blasts of apparently irresistible hurricanes: modern ideologies; yet there are also a few spring breezes --- the breath of the Spirit, who "blows where he will" (Jn 3:8).

There are three actors on this stage:

one, filling it completely, is the incalculable number of the people of today, growing, rising, aware as never before, equipped with formidable tools that give them power which has something prodigious, angelical, diabolical, salutary and murderous about it. It makes them lords of the earth and sky, and often slaves to themselves.

They are giants, yet they totter weakly and blindly, in agitation and fury, in search of rest and order. They know about everything, and are skeptical about everything and their own destiny. They are unbridled in the flesh and foolish in the mind...

One feature seems to be common to all of them: they are unhappy, something essential is lacking. Who can get near them? Who can instruct them about the things that are necessary for life, when they know so many superfluous things? Who can interpret them and, through truth, resolve the doubts which are tormenting them? Who can reveal to them the call which they have implicitly in their hearts?

The crowds are an ocean --- they are humanity. They hold the stage, and are passing slowly but tumultuously across it. It is mankind that makes history...

But there enters another character. He is small, like an ant, weak, unarmed, as tiny as a *quantite negligeeable*. He tries to make his way through the throng of peoples; he is trying to say something.

He becomes unyielding, and tries to make himself heard; he assumes the appearance of a teacher, a prophet. He assures them that what he is saying does not come from himself, but is a secret

and infallible word, a word with a thousand echoes, resounding in the thousand languages of mankind.

But what strikes us most in the comparison we make between the personage and his surroundings, is disproportion: in number, in quality, in power, in means, in topicality... But that little man --- you will have guessed who he is: the apostle, the messenger of the Gospel --- is the witness. In this case it is the Pope, daring to pit himself against mankind. David and Goliath? Others will say Don Quixote... A scene irrelevant, outmoded, embarrassing, dangerous, ridiculous. This is what one hears said: and the appearances seem to justify these comments.

But, when he manages to obtain a little silence and attract a listener, the little man speaks in a tone of certainty which is all his own. He utters inconceivable things, mysteries of an invisible world which is yet near us, the divine world, the Christian world, but mysteries...

Some laugh; others say to him: we will hear you another time, as they said to Saint Paul in the Areopagus at Athens (Ac 17:32-33).

However, someone there has listened, and always listens, and has perceived that in that plaintive but assured voice there can be distinguished two singular and most sweet accents, which resound wonderfully in the depths of their spirits: one is the accent of truth and the other is the accent of love.

They perceive that the word is the speaker's only in the sense that he is an instrument: it is a Word in its own right, the Word of Another. Where was that Other, and where is He now? He could not and cannot be other than a living Being, a Person who is essentially a Word, a Word made man, the Word of God.

Where was and where is the Word of God made man? For it was and is now clear that he was and is now present! And this is the third actor on the world stage: the actor who stands above it all and fills the whole stage wherever he is welcomed, by a distinct yet not uncustomary way for human knowledge: the way of faith.

Oh Christ, is it You? You, the Truth? You, Love? Are you here, here with us? In this so much developed, so confused world? This world so corrupt and cruel when it decides to be content with itself, and so innocent and so lovable when it is evangelically childlike?

This world, so intelligent, but so profane, and often deliberately blind and deaf to Your signs? This world which You, fountain of Love, loved unto death; You, who revealed yourself in Love? You, salvation, You the joy of the human race. You are here with the Church, Your sacrament and instrument (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1:48; *Gaudium et Spes*, 45). Does it proclaim you and convey you?

This is the perennial drama which develops over the centuries, and which finds in our journey an instant of indescribable reality. Let us spiritually take part in it all together, dearest Brethren and children. (November 25, 1970)

A Personal Word About Pope Paul VI

I owe much of my growth as a person and believer to the changes Paul VI instituted within the Catholic Church. I was in grade school when these began taking effect: the lifting of the ban against meat on Fridays, the reform of the mass and the change from Latin to English, the advent of folk masses, the loosening of priests and nuns dress code, the personalizing of the rite of Confession (including the opportunity to go Aface-to-face≅), greater openness to the world and other religions, increased interest in social justice, and greater emphasis on the Bible in both the mass and lay spirituality.

When I went to the University of Michigan, I got involved in a very active Newman Center. I was exposed to Catholic theology, Bible studies, ecumenical activities, Christian fellowship, social justice ministries and activists, and uplifting folk masses. The priests related to the students on an even, one-to-one level, something that I wasn't used to.

Pope Paul VI died the summer before my sophomore year in college, but by then his progressive mandate for the Church was firmly in place. I began reading some of his encyclicals, and gradually accumulated a library of books on the Bible, theology, and spirituality.

When I moved to Boston, I got involved in a student parish that was much like the Newman Center in Ann Arbor. I began taking graduate-level courses in biblical studies, theology, and adult education. Such courses were rarely accessible to laypersons prior to Paul VI's pontificate.

At the age of 23, I began leading a Bible study and receiving spiritual direction (one-on-one discussions with a sister, priest, or trained layperson about how God was working in my life, and how I was responding), which I have continued to this day. I enrolled in a yearlong intensive training program for adult religious educators. It provided training in psychology, Scripture, and adult education methods from outstanding professors at various Boston universities and seminaries.

I attended weekend retreats in which I was exposed to such disciplines as Jungian psychology, logotherapy, centering prayer, modern theories of adult development, and the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.

I would never have had these opportunities were it not for the decentralization and resulting liberties Paul set in motion. His progressive writings and teachings encouraged enthusiasm, experimentation, and adaptation that despite aberrations led to a more relevant faith and vibrant Church, and an informed and involved laity. I rarely came into contact with clergy, institutions, or parishes that abused the reform process through inappropriate innovations or experimentation, though quite a few pushed the envelope. In any event it was never to the point where the core of Catholic teaching and worship (the Mass) was compromised or affected adversely.

One example of an abuse occurred at the student parish I attended at Michigan. The pastoral staff replaced masculine language in the Scripture readings with inclusive language before the Bishops approved such. Did it have a negative effect on the liturgy? Probably not, since at that time inclusive language was "in." However, it was nonetheless an inappropriate initiative, particularly since the original language biblical texts were not consulted and thus in some way the meaning of the text could have been changed slightly by these insertions. At a lectors meeting, we were told that if we were uncomfortable with the changes, we didn't have to lector. Coercion and intransigence can come from all sides, and each of us is capable of it.

I remember being invited to dinner by a priest who was a theology professor and to whom I mentioned that I liked Paul VI. He said that he did too, but he disagreed with Paul VI's position on contraception and felt great pain over the issue. I recently came across his name in a book on the subject. This was one of many opportunities I had to enter into dialogue on hot issues within the Church and society.

One of the reasons I resonated with Paul VI was that he took a moderate position on issues, thereby infuriating extremists on both ends of the spectrum. He was under enormous pressure from both radicals and reactionaries, yet somehow navigated a middle course. Unfortunately moderates are usually not positioned or passionate enough to drown out or subdue the protests of extremists, and thus Paul VI was widely criticized during the later years of his pontificate, and has been largely forgotten or even vilified since. Even high quality biographies of John Paul II generally fail to give Paul VI his due and assess his pontificate in a balanced and informed manner.

Paul VI usually cushioned his teachings with an acknowledgment of their challenging nature and an exhortation to be gentle and compassionate towards ourselves and others when we fall short in our implementation efforts. Paul VI always left room for individuals to exercise discretion and creativity within moral boundaries in order to find the spiritual path appropriate to them.

Conversely, when I read Pope John Paul II, I feel like I am being taught black and white concepts that I am under obligation to accept and practice as instructed, as they are God's will and in my best interests. While I follow and have derived much benefit from his teachings, particularly his theology of the body and his untiring promotion of human dignity and rights, I feel more respect and admiration than closeness, though I am aware of the great affection so many feel for him.

While I felt like I could respectfully and privately disagree with John Paul II on minor points, usually involving particular applications where I am not even sure there was a real disagreement, I don't get the impression that he would have been affected by my perspective. He lived and thought out his teachings so intensely for so long that I think it would have been difficult for him to incorporate alternative perspectives.

When I read Paul VI, I feel the presence of a guide who is journeying alongside me. I believe that he would welcome my feedback and concerns, and encourage me to responsibly and in good conscience adapt his message to my circumstances. As a diplomat, Paul was accustomed to negotiation and dialogue, while John Paul was a professor communicating his knowledge on a complex subject.

I sense that Paul expects something positive from me in accordance with my potential, but when I fall short his words encourage, correct, and console rather than denounce. When I reflect on his life, papacy, and teachings and consider their application to my life, I do so with enthusiasm and hope, free of stifling pressures and debilitating guilt.

I rejoice at the opportunity to expand my horizons through extensive exposure to a modern prophet. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to dialogue with one of the greatest popes and mystics in church history and a man with an uncommon grasp of the state and challenges of modern life in light of the Christian message. I wrote this book to share this empowering privilege.

Why I Wrote This Book

I have a passion to share the message and legacy of Paul VI because of his transformational influence in my life, as discussed in my testimony below, and his significant contribution to the Church and the world, which largely has gone unrecognized.

At the time of composition of this book, there are a number of books available in English on Pius XII and John XXIII, and even some on John Paul I, but none on Paul VI. Consequently there is a huge information gap surrounding Paul VI, particularly among young Catholics, but also clergy, religious, and informed laypersons. The perception exists that the only significant events of his pontificate were his administration of Vatican II and the issuance of *Humanae Vitae* and *Populorum Progressio*.

Paul's Accessible Quality

Complementing my personal, historical, ecclesiastical, and spiritual reasons for writing this book is a practical one, perhaps most important to the reader: Besides being prophetic and profound, Paul VI is comparatively (for a pope) easy to read, providing that you take your time.

Paul's diplomatic and personal sensitivities, cultural refinement, literary skills, and subject knowledge are such that he cultivates his thoughts, measures his words, and offers nuances of insight that will escape us if we proceed in haste. We have to condition ourselves to re-read Paul's comments and reflect on them deliberately in order to assimilate them and extract their abundance of meaning and applications.

One does not become a high-ranking diplomat or pope by communicating at a third-grade level, so we have to be prepared for compound sentences, pregnant phrases that invite protracted reflection, and a refined vocabulary. Paul was a natural writer who lived long before the dumbing down trends of modern publishing. It would not be a bad idea to have a dictionary nearby for the occasional instances when Paul invites us to expand our vocabulary.

Unlike John Paul II, Paul is literary rather than philosophical by nature, and does not belabor points for conceptual or argumentation purposes as one would in an academic or juridical environment. As a diplomat, Paul was primarily concerned with his audience's reception and comprehension of his message.

Paul was well acquainted with the outstanding Catholic novelists and spiritual writers of the twentieth century, and as any good writer will tell you, reading classic literature inevitably enhances your writing.

C.S. Lewis counseled practice to those who wished to improve their writing. Paul acquired plenty of practice in drafting documents as Pius XII's pro-secretary of state, so he was already an experienced craftsman by the time he became pope. Upon hearing of Paul VI's transfer to the see of Milan, Pope John XXIII commented "Where else will he (Pius XII) find someone capable of writing a letter or drafting a document in the way he can?"

Prophetic Exemplification

Perhaps the best illustration of the relevance of these topics for today and Paul's papacy is his most famous speech, his October 4, 1965 address to the U.N. General Assembly. It was one of the most important speeches of the twentieth century because it affirmed eloquently, forcefully, and coherently the primacy of peace as a universal modern value.

Current events and recent history reveal the pertinence and tragic rejection of Paul's assertion. With respect to U.S. militarism, scrutiny uncovers a common thread of misleading rationales and associated costs far beyond what is acknowledged by the government and mass media. This applies to both brief and protracted engagements.