

# Diocese of Tyler

## Office of Communications

1015 ESE Loop 323  
Tyler, TX 75701-9663

**April 3, 2005**

Statement of Bishop Álvaro Corrada, SJ, bishop of the Diocese of Tyler:

Two years ago, on April 17, 2003, Pope John Paul II sent all Catholics in the world a letter, *Church of the Eucharist (Ecclesia de Eucharistia)*; and this year, we have been celebrating around the world a eucharistic year at the request of our pope.

At his death the Catholic Church loses the vicar of Christ on earth. Cardinals from around the world will gather in Rome for the election in conclave of our next Holy Father and bishop of Rome.

As each Catholic bishop is the visible principle and the foundation of unity within his particular church, the pope as bishop of Rome is the visible principle and the foundation of unity of the universal church under God.

The Roman pontiff, as successor of Peter the Apostle, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of the bishops and the multitude of the faithful. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, continues to guide the Catholic Church since its foundation in Jesus Christ.

Pope John Paul II brought communion and unity to the church. We will remember him as the pope who went to ski slopes, the one who canoed, the one who went walking with his knapsack and walking shoes. We will remember his over 100 apostolic and missionary journeys around the world, like St. Paul of Tarsus.

His deep knowledge and wisdom will continue to direct the church and thinkers for centuries to come. The breadth of his writings on the doctrine of the Catholic Church make him an equal with St. Thomas Aquinas, the writer of the *Summa Theologia* in the 13th century.

I met and spoke with John Paul II last May in the Vatican. During those 15 minutes alone with him I gave him a message of love and prayers of the people of the Diocese of Tyler. He was grateful for our prayers and love.

At that last meeting, I told him that I understood his physical and spiritual suffering. His eyes were covered with a mist of tears and a deep gaze of tenderness and love for me and for all of us.

The love, greatness of soul, and wisdom of John Paul II will merit him here on earth the title of John Paul the great. May he by the mercy of God enter into heaven to contemplate the triune God.

The Diocese of Tyler will join the universal Catholic Church in the nine days of mourning for the pope. I ask the priests of the diocese to also celebrate a funeral Mass for him in every parish and mission.

The Diocese of Tyler will celebrate a funeral Mass for the repose of the soul of Pope John Paul II at 7 p.m. Monday, April 4, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Tyler.

*Bishop Álvaro Corrada, SJ*

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