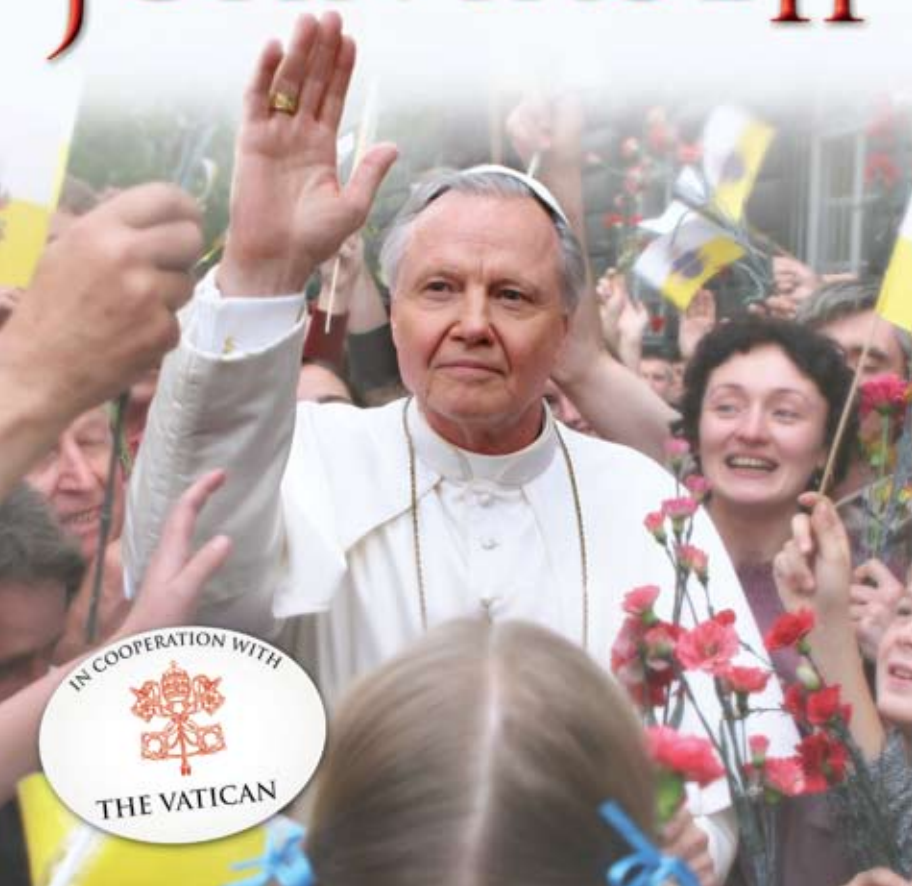


POPE

JOHN PAUL II



POPE JOHN PAUL II

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PART I

Questions plague young Karol Wojtyla about how to resist the Nazis. How does young Karol decide to resist?

In the autumn of 1942, Karol decides to enter the seminary. How did Karol's preparation for the priesthood begin with the preparation he received within his own family?

In response to the promptings of his female friend, Karol says, "The times we are living in... my heart is already consumed." What do you think the young Karol might have meant by this statement?

In the pope's book *Gift and Mystery*, he discusses his decision to answer God's call to the priesthood. "In the face of the spread of evil and the atrocities of the war, the meaning of the priesthood and its mission in the world became much clearer," he writes (p.34). How might the war have helped clarify Karol's calling?

In response to the Nazi occupation, Karol and his friends decide to fight oppression using their imagination. How might Catholics living today fight the oppression of the modern-day "dictatorship of relativism" using culture?

What does Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha tell the young Karol is the "highest form of resistance?"

At his first assignment as priest, at St. Florian's parish, Karol begins speaking with young people, visiting them at the university, and accompanying them on hiking and camping trips. Talk about how this relationship with the young was a relationship that continued throughout Wojtyla's life.

After the German occupation leaves Poland, what takes its place?

How do you think that Karol Wojtyla's living under the oppression of Germany and then Russia shaped his vision of freedom and the dignity of the human person?

PART II

Karol Wojtyla seems to struggle with the possibility of his being chosen as pope. From whom or what does he gain strength to embrace the decision?

To whom does he devote his papacy? Given later events, how is this significant?

Pope John Paul II is shown writing his first encyclical letter, *Redemptor Hominis*. In it he writes, "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it."

In the film, Karol says that he must respond to the abyss of evil with an abyss of love. In what ways does the Pope express this love?

What country does Pope John Paul II choose for his first foreign apostolic visit, and why?

The pope describes his four years spent doing manual labor as “the decisive developmental phase of his life.” How might the pope’s early work as a manual laborer have shaped his vision of work, the rights of the worker, and his ultimate support for the solidarity movement in Poland?

Following the 1981 assassination attempt, Pope John Paul II says that 1 mm separated him between life and death and asks, “What must I do?” How does the remainder of John Paul II’s pontificate answer that question? What is it that Pope John Paul II goes on to do?

The film shows the Pope’s inaugural audience with youth in Rome in 1984. How does this encounter lead him to begin the World Youth Day events?

Critics of John Paul say that his traditional approach was off-putting to women. Yet, in his 1995 *Letter to Women*, John Paul II writes of the “genius of women” as expressed through Mary. He encourages the full expression of a true feminism in society and the life of the Church. Talk about how the pope’s embracing of true femininity respects the authentic dignity of women.

How is the pope shown reacting to the news of his diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease?

Reporters, and even members of his own Curia, said that the young would not

show up for World Youth Day in Denver in 1993. Nearly 1 million young people did attend. What do you think drew the young to spend a week with the Pope?

The impact of Pope John Paul II continues through the JP II generation, as well as through the many religious vocations that find their beginning in his own vocation. What characteristics bind this generation together?

What advice does the Pope offer to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger when the Cardinal expresses his preference to return to Germany rather than serve as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith?

Why do you feel it was so important for Pope John Paul to live to the year 2000?

Pope John Paul II is shown, in his later years, as suffering the decline of health, the ravages of Parkinson’s, and eventually an inability to walk or speak publicly. Reflect upon how the Pope embraced his sufferings.

Fifty years from now, what do you anticipate will be most remembered about Pope John Paul II?

Share what impact Pope John Paul II’s life has made upon your own.



SCENE SELECTIONS

1. May 13, 1981
2. Krakow, Poland 1939
3. Dangerous Times
4. Keep Poland Alive
5. The Highest Resistance
6. How Does God Choose?
7. St. Florian's Church
8. Krakow, 1959
9. An Old Friend
10. The Conclave
11. A Pope for Everyone
12. Pope of Surprises
13. Home to Poland
14. Warsaw, June 2, 1979
15. Undeclared War
16. Ways to Forgive
17. Iraq Invades Kuwait
18. Peace & Reconciliation
19. The New Millennium
20. The Last Days

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