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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

Statement by Archbishop Henry J. Mansell On the Death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II

Hartford, Connecticut, April 2, 2005: Pope John Paul II has left an indelible imprint on history. He has impacted us all. He is, and certainly will continue to be an inspiration to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Even in his recent years of intense human pain, he transcended that pain with love, love for us and love for God. That love was palpable in the effect he had on us, and quite obviously, the Holy Father responded and rebounded from the love he felt from us. Being in his presence, you couldn't help but feel, deep down inside, that you were in the presence of an historic person, a truly holy person. You couldn't help but know that you were a witness to greatness. As the most traveled Pope in history, millions were able to share this experience. He spoke to more people in more countries, in more languages, and in more cultural settings than anyone in history. He was edification for the whole world.

Pope John Paul II taught us so much. He constantly and dramatically reinforced his belief in the dignity of all human life. He came of age in the shadow of a totalitarian regime. Through his efforts he witnessed the collapse of that regime; he saw the Iron Curtain fall around the world. He was vigilant in the fight against all forms of political and social oppression. The Holy Father was consistent in his proclamation of the values and teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. His strength of faith and strength of character, the enormous power and vitality of his papacy, united the globe in admiration for this valiant man. He was able and willing to "walk the walk" of Christ, of love, and it was that love which unites us in our mourning. He had the heart of a pastor and the intellectual greatness of a doctor of the Church. He was truly the Vicar of Christ, and as Christ did, he embraced the young, the weak, the vulnerable, the people of everyday. He was the Pope of the People.

Pope John Paul II was always young at heart himself, and young people around the world connected with him. They loved him, truly.

He embraced and reached out to non-Catholics. This was the first pope to enter a synagogue in Rome. It was John Paul who apologized to Jews for the misconception that they were to blame for the Crucifixion. He also began a dialogue with the leaders of many religious faiths and worked diligently in an effort to achieve unity with the Orthodox Churches. This Holy Father knew suffering. He knew political suffering. He knew personal suffering. He empathized with the great suffering of peoples from around the world. He knew the power of embracing that suffering. This Pope was unafraid. He lives in peace this day. He leaves us a legacy of peace and of hope. We will miss him deeply. We will remember him. Rightly, we pause to reflect on his life, on his many accomplishments, on his great faith and great love, for God, for his Church, for us. He was a truly great Pope, truly a great man. We mourn our loss. But, we also rejoice in his death and resurrection in Christ. We thank God for the gift of Pope John Paul II.

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