



**Statement of**  
**Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory, SLD**  
***Archbishop of Atlanta***  
***Regarding the Death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II***

The Catholic Church has lost a most faithful Pastor and Teacher with the death of Pope John Paul II. For more than 26 years, his was a voice of clarity and constancy in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in calling humanity to live in and to work for peace, in challenging the men and women of our world to both recognize our dignity as children of God and to promote the inalienable rights that flow from that human dignity from conception to natural death.

He cared for the Church of Christ with great wisdom, zeal, and compassion as he guided the People of God in implementing the legacy of the Second Vatican Council and in preparing an agenda for the Third Christian Millennium. When he assumed the Chair of Peter on October 16, 1978, few could have envisioned the breadth of his pastoral vision and ministry. He visited and encountered more people in his missionary outreach than perhaps all of his predecessors combined. He was a giant in the religious world and his passing brings great sorrow to the hearts of all Catholics and to men and women of faith throughout the world.

In my name, in that of Archbishop John F. Donoghue, my predecessor, and in the name of all of the Clergy, Religious, and Faithful Catholics throughout North Georgia, I pray that Christ Jesus will be merciful to this most generous Shepherd of the Church and reward him even as we pray with *Light, Happiness, and Peace*.

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