



The Holy See

HOMILY OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO COMMEMORATE THE SERVANT OF GOD PAUL VI

Thursday, 6 August 1998

The memory of my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI who died here in Castel Gandolfo some 20 years ago, lives on throughout the Church. Time has not weakened his remembrance; on the contrary, the passing of the years makes his figure appear ever brighter and his prophetic apostolic insights ever more modern and surprising. Then this year, the celebration of the centenary of the birth of this Pontiff, the wise and faithful guide of the Christian people during the Second Vatican Council and the difficult post-conciliar period, makes the memorial of his person more familiar to us, and the witness of his love to Christ and to the Church, more incisive.

He died on the day when the liturgy commemorates the extraordinary event of the Transfiguration of the Lord. In a homily, he commented on today's Gospel passage in this way: "We must rediscover the transfigured face of Christ, in order to feel that he is still, and for our sake, our light. The light which illumines every soul who seeks and accepts it, which brightens every human scene and effort, giving them colour and emphasis, merit and a destiny, hope and happiness" (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*: 1964, 133-134).

As we begin the celebration of the Eucharist during which we offer our prayers for this unforgettable Pontiff, his words prompt us to ask the Lord, for the Church and for every member of the faithful, for that courageous and heroic fidelity to the Gospel which distinguished his ministry as Successor of Peter.