October 22nd: Memorial of Saint John Paul II, pope

Gospel text (*Jn* 21:15-17): After Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples and eaten breakfast with them, he said to Simon Peter... “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

St. John Paul II, pope (1920-2005)

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Today, we celebrate the Feast of Saint John Paul II, the "Pope Parish priest of the world" (he traveled enough kilometers to go to the Moon twice). His pontificate was one of the longest in history (almost 27 years), during which he faced all aspects of the life of the Church, placing love for Jesus Christ as the center of ecclesial life: he published the new “Catechism of the Catholic Church”, promulgated a new “Code of Canon Law” and approved the new official version of the Bible (the “New Vulgate” edition). He was a tireless driver of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue; an encourager of peace and devotion to Divine Mercy; a promoter of many causes of canonization and beatification (highlighting the importance of the sanctity of the lay faithful)...

He was one of the most influential personalities of the twentieth century, as well as a witness and victim of its horrors: he personally experienced the harshness of Nazism and Soviet communism, which he opposed through a spiritual and cultural revolution. Pope Wojtyla led the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee of the Year 2000. It is said that he is the Pope who could not have time to read everything he wrote: 14 encyclicals, innumerable letters and apostolic exhortations, homilies, decrees ... Consecrated bishop at 40 and appointed cardinal 7 years later, Bishop Wojtyla was one of the youngest conciliar fathers of Vatican II.

- Upon being elected Bishop of Rome (1978), the Primate of Poland - the legendary Cardinal Wyszynski - told the new Pope: "You will lead the Church of the Council until the third millennium." Neither the near-fatal attacks he suffered nor his long and serious illness could prevent it!