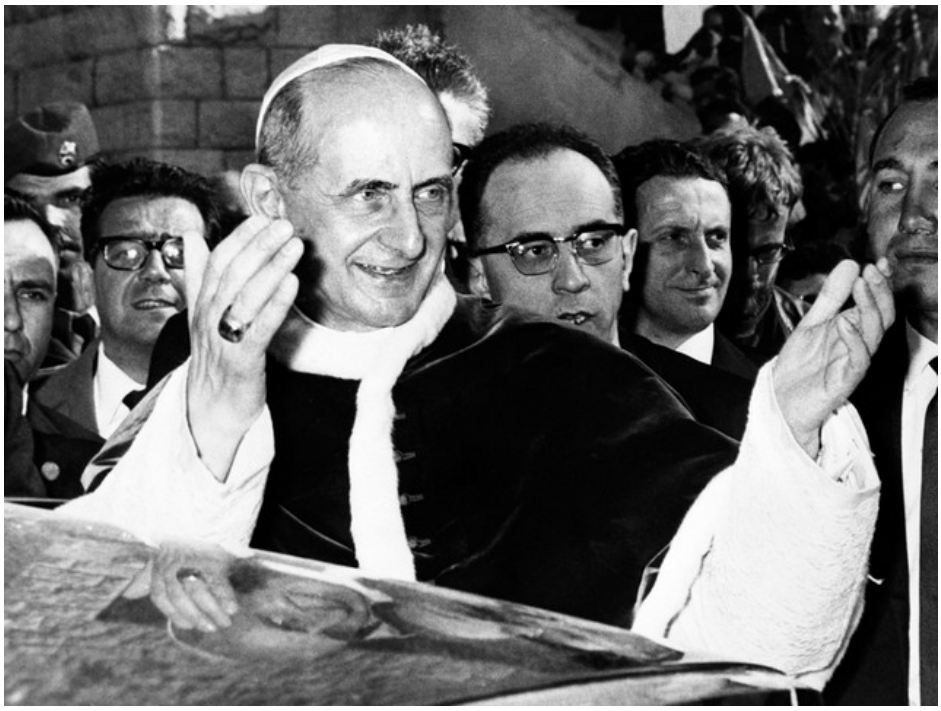
St. Paul VI's Prayer at the Holy Sepulchre



Paul VI – canonized October 14, 2018 – was the first Pope, after St. Peter, to go to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 55 years ago. In communion with the new saint, we unite in prayer using the words he recited before the Holy Sepulchre, January 4, 1964, contained in the following extracts of great depth, upon which we are asked to reflect:

Brothers and Sons, may our minds be enlivened, our consciences be lightened and all the forces of our spirit spread beneath the luminous gaze of Christ. We are sincerely sorrowful for all of our sins, the sins of our fathers, those of past history, we are conscience of those of our own time, of the world in which we live.

And so that our pain is neither vile nor reckless, but humble; so that it may not be desperate, but confident; so that it may not be inert, but prayerful; united to that of Jesus Christ our Lord, patient up to death, and obedient up to the Cross, and re-evoking His moving memory, implore His saving mercy.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because with Your Cross you have redeemed the world.

Here, where You, O Lord Jesus, the innocent, have been accused;

the just, you have been judged;

the saint, you have been condemned;

You, Son of man, have been tormented, crucified and put to death;

You, Son of God, have been blasphemed, mocked and denied;

You, the light, have experienced the darkness;

You, the King, have been raised on a Cross;

You, the Life, suffered death and You died, and rose to life.

We remember You, O Lord Jesus. We adore You, O Lord Jesus. We invoke you, O Lord Jesus.

Here, O Lord Jesus, Your Passion was oblation (Is. 53, 7) planned, accepted, desired, it was a sacrifice: You were the Victim, You, the Priest.

Here Your death was the expression, the measure of human sin, it was the holocaust of supreme heroism, it was the price offered to divine justice, it was the proof of supreme love.

Here was the duel between life and death.

Here You were the victor, O Christ, You died for us and then rose again. Lord, all powerful God, holy and immortal God, have mercy on us!

We are here, O Lord Jesus, we have come like the guilty who return to the place of their crime,

we come as the ones who followed You, but who also betrayed You; so often faithful and so often unfaithful;

we have come to recognize the mysterious relationship between our sins and Your passion, our work and Your work;

we have come to beat our breasts, to ask You for forgiveness, to implore Your mercy,

we have come because we know that You can, that You want to forgive us; because You have expiated for us, You are our redemption and our hope.

Lamb of God, You who take away the sins of the world, forgive us, O Lord; Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, hears our voice, O Lord; Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, revive in us the desire for and confidence in Your forgiveness, rekindle our will to conversion and fidelity, let us taste the certainty and also the sweetness of Your mercy. Lord Jesus, Redeemer and our Master, give us the strength to forgive others, so that we too may be truly forgiven by You.

Lord Jesus, Redeemer and Shepherd, put in us the capacity to love as You want, by Your example and with Your grace, You and all those who are brothers in You. Lord Jesus, our Redeemer and our Peace, who have made us know Your last wish: “that all may be one”, fulfill this desire that we make ours and that becomes our prayer here: “May we all be one”.

(April 2019)