“Be Not Afraid”: Learning from St. John Paul II

As we continue to learn about the artwork throughout our church spaces, we turn our attention to the new pictures in our meeting room, dedicated to St. John Paul II. His life was marked by deep love for Christ, courageous faith, devotion to the Church, and an unwavering trust in God’s providence.

We recently celebrated his feast day on October 22, giving us a special opportunity to remember and celebrate his incredible life and witness. St. John Paul II is the patron saint of young people, families, and several other groups, signifying his deep concern for the young and his belief in their ability to transform the world through faith. Throughout his pontificate, he repeatedly encouraged young people to wholeheartedly embrace Christ and recognize that their lives have a God-given purpose and mission. His patronage reminds us that holiness is not limited by age or circumstance, but is a call extended to each of us.

When Karol Wojtyła became Pope John Paul II in 1978, one of his first and most memorable messages to the world was simple and powerful: ***“Be not afraid!”*** These words were not only a message for a particular moment in history- They were an invitation to every Christian to place our lives, our struggles, and our future into the hands of Jesus Christ. When we truly know and trust Christ, we do not have to allow fear to determine how we live.

St. John Paul II deeply understood that holiness is not reserved for a select few. Each of us is called to become a saint through the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives. We can model his virtuous life by making time for prayer, remaining faithful to the teachings of Christ and His Church, courageously standing for what is good and true, forgiving others, serving those in need, and treating every person with dignity and love. He reminds us of the importance of placing Christ at the center of everything we do.

His life was not without suffering, loss, or hardship. Yet through each challenge, he continued to trust in God. His witness encourages us to ask: *Where is Christ calling me to be courageous? What fear is keeping me from giving myself more fully to Him? How can I become more faithful in the ordinary moments of my day?*

The saints are not distant figures whose holiness is impossible to imitate. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ who show us what it looks like to respond generously to God’s grace. St. John Paul II, along with all the saints, invites us to lift our eyes toward heaven and remember that we, too, are called to holiness.

As you see this new artwork in our meeting room, may it serve as a reminder of St. John Paul II’s enduring words: ***“Be not afraid”.*** May we have the courage to follow Christ wherever He leads us, trusting that He will give us the grace that we need. And may we ask St. John Paul II, and all the saints, to intercede for us as we strive each day to become the people God has called us to be. St. John Paul II, pray for us!