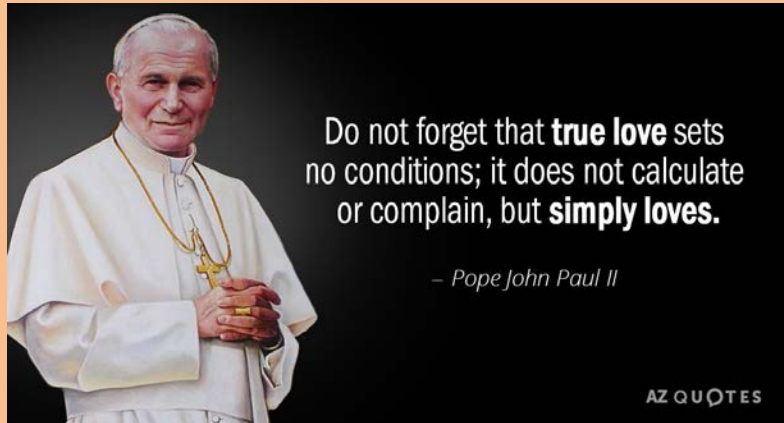


Pope John Paul II



Pope John Paul II, was a man who had suffered a lot, but never gave up hope. His mother died when he was 9 years old, his older brother Edmund died when he was 12 and when he was 21, his father died. The Pope's real name was Karol and he was from Poland. He was very athletic and went to Krakow University. He wanted to become a priest and began studying secretly because of World War II. He finished his religious studies at a Krakow seminary and was ordained in 1946.

In 1978, history was made. Karol was made Pope, a non-Italian Pope in more than four-hundred years. As the leader of the Catholic Church, he travelled the world, visiting more than 100 countries to spread his message of faith and peace. But he was close to home when he faced the greatest threat to his life. In 1981, an assassin shot John Paul II twice in St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. Fortunately, he was able to recover from his injuries and later forgave his attacker.