

The Pontiff's Will

'No Monument for Me'

Some notes for my will

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

1. I fix my attention on the mystery of death, and that which follows, in the light of Christ, who alone makes it clear; and so with a humble and serene trust, I recognize that truth, which for me has always been reflected in the present life by this mystery, and I bless the One who conquers death for having scattered the darkness and for unveiling His light.

Therefore, in face of death, the total and definitive separation from the present life, I feel the need to celebrate the gift, the fortune, the beauty, the destiny of this fleeting existence! Lord, I think of You who have called me to life, and even more, who, by making me a Christian, have given me rebirth and destined me for the fullness of life. Equally, I feel the obligation to thank and to bless those who were the channel of the gifts of life given to me, O Lord, by You: who introduced me to life (O, how blessed are my worthiest parents!), who educated me, wished me well, benefitted me, assisted me, surrounded me with good example, with care, affection, loyalty, goodness, courtesy, friendship, faithfulness, respect. I recognize the natural and spiritual supports which have given origin, assistance, comfort, meaning to my humble existence: how many gifts, how many beautiful and lofty things, how much hope have I received in this world! Now that the day is setting and everything ends and disappears of this stupendous and dramatic temporal, earthly scene, how can I thank you again, O Lord, for the natural gift of life, and the gift, even greater, of faith and of grace, in which at the end my surviving being is uniquely sheltered? How can I worthily celebrate Your goodness, O Lord, for having been incorporated in the ineffable Catholic Church when I scarcely had entered the world? For having been called and ordained to the priesthood of Christ? For having the joy and the mission of serving souls, the brethren, youth, the poor, the people of God and of having the unmerited honor of being a minister of the Holy Church, especially in Rome, then to Milan, as Archbishop, in the Cathedral, for me too lofty and most venerable Cathedral of Saints Ambrose and Charles, and finally to this supreme, formidable and most holy See of Saint Peter? In eternity, I will sing of your mercies, O Lord.

Greetings and blessings to all those whom I met on my earthly pilgrimage; to my co-workers, counselors and friends — they were so many, so good and generous and dear! Blessings on those who shared my ministry, my sons and brothers in Our Lord!

To you, Lodovico and Francesco, my brothers in blood and in the spirit, and to all the very dear ones of my home, who never asked anything of me nor ever obtained from me an earthly favor, and who always gave me an example of human and Christian virtue, who understood me with such discretion and cordiality, and above all who helped me to seek in the present life a life directed towards the future, to them I bequeath my peace and blessing.

My thought turns to the past and broadens outward, and I know well that this farewell would not be happy if I had not remembered to ask pardon inasmuch as I might have offended, not served, not loved enough; and in turn I offer the pardon that anyone might have desired of me. May the peace of the Lord be with us.

I feel that the Church surrounds me; O holy Church, one, catholic and apostolic, receive with my blessing and greeting my supreme act of love. To you, Rome, the diocese of St. Peter and the Vicar of Christ, most beloved by this most recent servant of the servants of God, my most paternal and fullest blessing that you, the city of the world, might always remember your mysterious vocation, and with human virtue and Christian faith, might know how to respond to your spiritual and universal mission throughout the history of the world.

And to all of you, my brothers in the Episcopacy, my cordial and reverent greeting; I am with you in our one faith, in the same love, in our common apostolic commitment, in the solidarity of service to the Gospel, for the building of the Church of Christ and for the salvation of all humanity. To all priests, men and women

religious, to students in our seminaries, to faithful and militant Catholics, to the young, the suffering, the poor; those seeking truth and justice, to all, the blessing of the pope who is dying.

And so, with special reverence and recognition of the cardinals and all the Roman Curia: before you, who were closest to me, I solemnly profess our Faith. I declare our Hope, I celebrate the Charity that does not die, humbly accepting from the divine will the death destined for me, invoking the great mercy of the Lord, imploring the clement intercession of Mary, most holy, of the Angels and Saints, and I recommend my souls to the prayers of good people.

2. I designate the Holy See as my universal heir: duty, gratitude and love, oblige me to do this. Except for the dispositions listed below.

3. My private secretary is to be executor. He will wish to consult with the Secretariat of State and comply with the juridical norms in force and with the good ecclesiastical customs.

4. Concerning worldly matters: I propose to die poor, and thus to simplify everything concerning this.

With regard to my own personal effects, the properties which are of family origin, my brothers Lodovico and Francesco are to dispose of them as they wish; I ask them for some prayers for my soul and for those of our dead ones. May they allocate some alms for needy persons or for good works. May they keep for themselves, and give to whoever deserves or would like some memento, either religious objects or books belonging to me. They should destroy my personal notes, copy-books, correspondence and writings.

Regarding other things which could be called mine: my private secretary, as executor, is to dispose of them, keeping for himself some reminder, and giving to his closest friends, some small object in memory. I would like all manuscripts and notes written by my hand to be burned, inasmuch as it is not destined for other's knowledge. In the case that the executor cannot see to this, I would wish the Secretariat of State to assume the job.

5. I strongly recommend funds to be set aside for adequate Masses and for generous alms, as much as possible.

Regarding the funeral: Let it be pious and simple. (Remove the catafalque now in use for the pontifical obsequies and substitute it with a modest and dignified apparatus).


The tomb: I would love it to be in the true earth, with a humble marker, indicating the place and inviting Christian piety. **No monument for me.**

6. And regarding that which most counts, bidding farewell to the scene of this world and going towards the judgement and mercy of God: I should say many things, many. On the state of the Church: may she have listened to some of our words, which for her we pronounced with gravity and love. On the Council: see that it is conducted to a good end, and see that its dispositions are carried out faithfully. On ecumenism: may the work of drawing closer to the separate brothers be continued with great understanding, with great patience, with great love, but without deflecting from the true Catholic doctrine. On the world: one should not believe that he is benefitting the world by assuming its customs, its tastes, but by studying it, loving it, and serving it.

I am closing my eyes on this sorrowful, dramatic and magnificent world, calling down upon it, once again, divine goodness. Once more I bless everyone. Rome especially, Milan and Brescia. I offer a special blessing in farewell upon the Holy Land, the land of Jesus, where I was a pilgrim of faith and peace.

And to the Church, to the beloved Catholic Church, to the whole of mankind, my apostolic blessing.

Then: into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. I: Paul VI: Given in Rome, in St. Peter's on June 30th, 1965, the third year of our Pontificate.



(Note: consultarsi al mio testamento).

In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Maria!

Credo. Spero. Amo. In R.

Ringrazio quanti mi hanno fatto del bene.

Chiedo perdono a quanti, io stesso non fatto del bene. A tutti io do nel Signore la pace.

Saluto il carissimo fratello Lodovico e tutti i miei familiari e parenti e amici, e quanti hanno accolto il mio ministero. A tutti i collaboratori, grazie. Alla Segreteria di Stato particolarmente.

Benedico con speciale carità Brescia, Milano, Roma, la Chiesa intera. Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine!

Opus mia cosa sia della Santa Sede.

Proveda il mio segretario particolare, il caro Don Pasquale Nocchi, a disporre per qualche suffragio e qualche beneficenza, e ad assegnare qualche ricordo fra libri e oggetti a me appartenuti a sé e a persone care.

Non desidero alcuna tomba speciale.


Qualche preghiera affinché Dio mi usi misericordia.

In Te, Domine, speravi. Amen, misericordia.

A tutti la mia benedizione, in nome Domine:

Paulus P.P. VI-

Castel Gandolfo, 16 Settembre 1972, ore 7,30.



Aggiunta alle mie disposizioni testamentarie

Desidero che i miei funerali siano semplicissimi e non desidero né tomba speciale, né alcun monumento. Qualche suffragio (beneficenze e preghiere).

Paulus P.P. VI-

16 luglio 1973