

Institute of National Remembrance

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Events commemorating the pontificate of John Paul II took place throughout Poland on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of his death











On 2 April 2023, the IPN President Karol Nawrocki, Ph.D., laid flowers at

the monument to St. John Paul II (1920—2004) and Ronald Reagan (1911—2004) in Gdańsk and at the plaque with the quote of the Pope in Westerplatte.

The IPN President stressed the importance of remembrance and the preservation of the truth about Karol Wojtyła:

Without John Paul II, communism would not have fallen. As early as 1970, when he was the Bishop of Cracow, he reacted to all the attacks on the Church.

The people of Gdańsk commemorated the Polish Pope with a *March of Gratitude* which was attended by the IPIN President who also took part in the Holy Mass in St. Bridget's Church. Similar marches were organised also in Warsaw, Cracow, Łódź, Szczecin and other cities.

Many people gathered in a symbolic place at Westerplatte - at the foot of a monument commemorating the heroic September 1939 struggle of Polish soldiers. The Holy Father met here with young people on 12 June 1987.

The word *Westerplatte* spoken at that time by John Paul II, became a symbol of the righteous cause, obligation and duty:

Every one of you, young friends, finds in life some sort of your own Westerplatte. Some dimension of tasks, which one must undertake and fulfil. Some order of rights and values. Which one has to uphold and defend. Defend them — for yourself and for others.

The pontificate of the Polish Pope was one of the longest in the history of the papacy. It lasted almost 27 years. During that time, Pope John Paul II visited a total of 132 countries and around 900 towns, giving over 2,400 speeches. His legacy includes 14 encyclicals, 14 exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, and 43 apostolic letters, addressed to selected circles and to all humanity. Many of his thoughts became an essential part of the Catholic Church teachings.

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