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Popes John Paul II and John XXIII Made Saints

Pope Francis

Canonizing two recent popes in the presence of his immediate predecessor, Pope Francis praised the new Sts. John XXIII and John Paul II as men of courage and mercy who responded to challenges of their time by modernizing the Catholic Church in fidelity to its ancient traditions. "They were priests, bishops and popes of the 20th century," Pope Francis said April 27 in his homily during Mass in St. Peter's Square. "They lived through the tragic events of that century, but they were not overwhelmed by them. For them, God was more powerful." He said, "John XXIII and John Paul cooperated with the Holy Spirit in renewing and updating the church in keeping with

"May both of them teach us not to be scandalized by the wounds of Christ and to enter ever more deeply into the mystery of divine mercy."

her pristine features, those features the saints have given her throughout the centuries." Speaking before a crowd of half a million that included retired Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis praised St. John for his best-known accomplishment, calling the Second Vatican Council, which he said "showed an exquisite openness to the Holy Spirit." Pope Francis characterized St. John Paul as the "pope of the family," a title he said the late pope himself had hoped to be remembered by. Pope Francis said he was sure St. John Paul was guiding the church on its path to two upcoming synods of bishops on the family, to be held at the Vatican this October and in October 2015. The pope spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation of his homily follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

at the heart of this Sunday that concludes the octave of Easter and that St. John Paul II wished to dedicate to divine mercy are the glorious wounds of the risen Jesus.

He had already shown those wounds when he first appeared to the apostles on the very evening of that day following the Sabbath, the day of the resurrection. But, as we have heard, Thomas was not there that evening, and when the others told him that they had seen the Lord, he replied that unless he himself saw and touched those wounds, he would not believe.

A week later Jesus appeared once more to the disciples gathered in the upper room.

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May 8, 2014
Volume 44
Number 1