

(The following press release is from the international movement We Are Church, of which Call To Action is a member organization)

International Movement We Are Church – IMWAC

Movimiento internacional Somos-Iglesia

Movimento Internacional Nós somos Igreja

Movimento Internazionale Noi siamo Chiesa

Mouvement international Nous sommes Eglise

Internationale Bewegung Wir sind Kirche

www.we-are-church.org www.somos-iglesia.org

Rome / Lisbon, January 16, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

We Are Church: Beatification of a controversial, contradictory Pope

Pope John Paul II, whose beatification will be celebrated on 1 May 2011, was a pope of great contradiction. **His tragedy lies in the discrepancy between his commitment to reform and dialogue in the world and his return to authoritarianism within the church.**

It was **his penchant for spiritual authoritarianism** that contributed to the greatest tragedy of his tenure as pope: the sexual abuse of thousands of children globally. By holding church hierarchy paramount above the needs of the people, John Paul II perpetuated a toxic environment in which priests were permitted, often repeatedly, to sexually abuse children as long as the criminal behaviour was kept secret, preserving the public image of untarnished leadership.

Perhaps one of the best reflections of this is seen in **John Paul II's strong relationship with the Legion of Christ and its founder Marcial Maciel**. Maciel is accused of decades of serious abuse against women and youth, much of which was allowed to percolate due in part to the 1983 bylaws John Paul II approved for Maciel's religious order that demanded secrecy and prohibited criticism of its founder.

It was John Paul II's same need for hierarchical control that also led to the constriction of theology with scarring impact on people's lives. His **attempt to discredit liberation theology** left thousands working for liberation without the full theological and ecclesial support they deserved while suffering under brutal political regimes.

Spiritual authoritarianism was also seen in John Paul II's **attempt to suppress discourse on gender equality** which, in turn, deprived the Catholic world of the gifts women would bring to church leadership. **His stance against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people** places him in complicity with local churches and governments who continue to deny the civil and moral equality of LGBT persons. Additionally, his **repeated denouncements of condom use** complicated the moral choice of millions around the world attempting to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and promote sexual health.

The International Movement We Are Church believes that beatification and ultimately sainthood should not be measured by whether a "miracle" can be attributed to a particular person, but rather, whether someone's life truly embodies the values of Christ who sought, not power, but the well being of God's people.

Background Information:

The *International Movement We Are Church*, founded in Rome in 1996, is represented in

more than twenty countries on all continents and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups. *We Are Church* is an international movement within the Roman Catholic Church and aims at renewal on the basis of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). *We Are Church* was started in Austria in 1995 with a church referendum, answering the paedophile scandal of the former Cardinal of Vienna/Austria, Hans-Hermann Groer.

Please contact / Póngase en contacto con / Contatti / Contacter /Kontakt/ Por favor entre em contato:

Austria: Hans Peter Hurka +43-650-315 42 00 hans_peter.hurka@gmx.at
Belgium: Edith Kuropatwa-Fèvre +32-(0)-2-567-09-64 ekf.paves@happymany.net
Brazil: Irene Cacais +55-61 3223 4599 luisirenecacais@solar.com.br
Canada: Jean Trudeau +1-613)745-2170 trudeau.jean@videotron.ca
Cataluña: Francesc Bragulat somescat@somesglesia-cat.org
Chile: Enrique Orellana +56-696 4491 lapazesobradelajusticia@yahoo.com
Denmark: Kaare Rübner Jorgensen +45-367 81 804 ruebnerjo@webspeed.dk
Finland: Giovanni Politi giovanni.politi@kolumbus.fi
France: Hubert Tournès +33-240119873 hubertournes@orange.fr
Germany: Christian Weisner +49-172-518 40 82 media@we-are-church.org
Hungary: Dr. Marcell Mártonffy +36-1 2190621 martonffy@pantelweb.hu
Ireland: Helen McCarthy +353-61-310562 wearechurchireland@eircom.net
Italy: Vittorio Bellavite +39-02-70602370 vi.bel@IOL.IT
Netherlands: Henk Baars +31-6-41170229 hbaars@steknet.nl
Norway: Aasmund Vik +47-47269148 aasmund.vik@nationaltheatret.no
Peru: Franz Wieser +51-1-4492716 fwieser@speedy.com.pe
Portugal: Maria Joao Sande Lemos +351-91 460 2336 mjoaosandel@gmail.com
South Africa: Brian Robertson +27-21-7945527 brian.r@mweb.co.za
Spain: Raquel Mallavibarrena +34-649332654 rmal@telefonica.net
Sweden: Krister Janzon +46-86620802 krister.janzon@comhem.se
Switzerland: Brigitte Durrer +41-819212725 bridu@gmx.ch
United Kingdom: Valerie Stroud +44-(0)7904 332201 valeriejstroud@we-are-church.org
United States: Anthony Padovano +1-973-539-8732 tpadovan@optonline.net
United States: Nicole Sotelo +1-773.404.0004 x285 nicole@cta-usa.org