



Pope honours Cardinal Wu in Mass for deceased church leaders

VATICAN CITY (CNS): Pope John Paul II presided at a Mass for cardinals and bishops who died over the past year, including Cardinal John Baptist Wu, and honoured their memories "in the expectation of being able to embrace them again" in heaven.

During the November 4 liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope praised the deceased church leaders as pastors "who instilled in the hearts of the faithful the disturbing and consoling truth of God's love".

"In the name of the God of love, their hands blessed, their words comforted, their presence — even silent — witnessed eloquently that God's mercy has no end," he said.

The 82-year-old pontiff gave the homily and final blessing at the annual memorial Mass, which was celebrated in Latin by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state.

The pope mentioned by name the eight cardinals who died in the last year, including Cardinal John Baptist Wu Cheng-Chung of Hong Kong and Vietnamese Cardinal Francois Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, who suffered 13 years of imprisonment in communist Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Some of them had the grace to offer (their) witness in a heroic way, facing difficult trials and inhuman persecutions," the pope said.

He said the prelates' deaths, seen in the light of Christ's resurrection from the dead, were "in reality entrance into the fullness of life".

"In this light of faith, we feel even closer to our deceased brothers: Death has apparently separated us, but the power of Christ and his Spirit unites us in a way that is even deeper," the pope said.