

**The International Republican Institute
2005 Freedom Dinner and Award Ceremony
Honoring George W. Bush and Pope John Paul II
Wednesday, May 18, 2005
Remarks by Cardinal Theodore McCarrick**

Thank you. I only hold the applause because I know you're supposed to get out of here by nine o'clock, and I don't want to get blamed. But I take the applause as for the great Holy Father John Paul II.

As Senator McCain said so beautifully, the ideals the late Holy Father are certainly very much the ideals of IRI, and I think he would be so pleased to know of your work, to know of what you do, to know of how you reach out in so many areas.

The centerpiece of the teaching of Pope John Paul II was the dignity of the human person, and the dignity of the human person demands that that person has rights – right to life, right to liberty, right to express oneself – all those rights that are part of democracy. And these were the wharf and wolf of all of the teaching and all of the work of Pope John Paul II.

I had the privilege of knowing him for 30 years, and of loving him – an extraordinary human being, a brilliant man, a man of extraordinary courage, but a man of remarkable warmth and goodness. And I think that's how he was able to change the world, in a certain sense. And it is a great honor, I think, for all of us in the Catholic community to see him honored by IRI.

I'm sure that I'd be able to present this to his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, who is very much not a carbon copy, because you can't have a carbon copy of a special man like Karol Wojtyła, but who is a man who has always followed the same thought, the same desire, the same courageous stands against terrorism and tyranny in the world as his predecessor.

So on behalf of Pope John Paul II, now very happy in home in Heaven I'm sure, and on behalf of his successor, I am very honored to be able to accept this very important award, because not only of what it says but what it means to us, who are all working for this dignity of the human person, which is the center and basis of all democracy. So God bless you all, thank you very much.