

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Story of Saint John Paul II
A Boy Who Became Pope



Written and Illustrated by
Fabiola Garza

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SECOND EDITION

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It was deep in the month of May. The wind whistled through the fields of a small country town in the heart of Poland. A little boy was born that day. His parents named him Karol. But everyone called him Lolek.





The seasons went quickly by, and Lolek grew. He was the second-best goalie in town. But one day he slipped and missed the ball. His best friend Jerzy helped him to his feet. “Well, you can’t be great *all* the time,” he said.



Lolek disagreed. “Let’s race to the lake and whoever swims to the other side first is the greatest.” And off they ran.





Lolek lost the race, but he got home in time for supper.

“Lolek, be very quiet,” Papa said. “Your mother is sick and needs rest.”

The next day she didn't seem much better—or the next. Lolek hoped to cheer her up. He plucked a red poppy from the field and gave it to her.

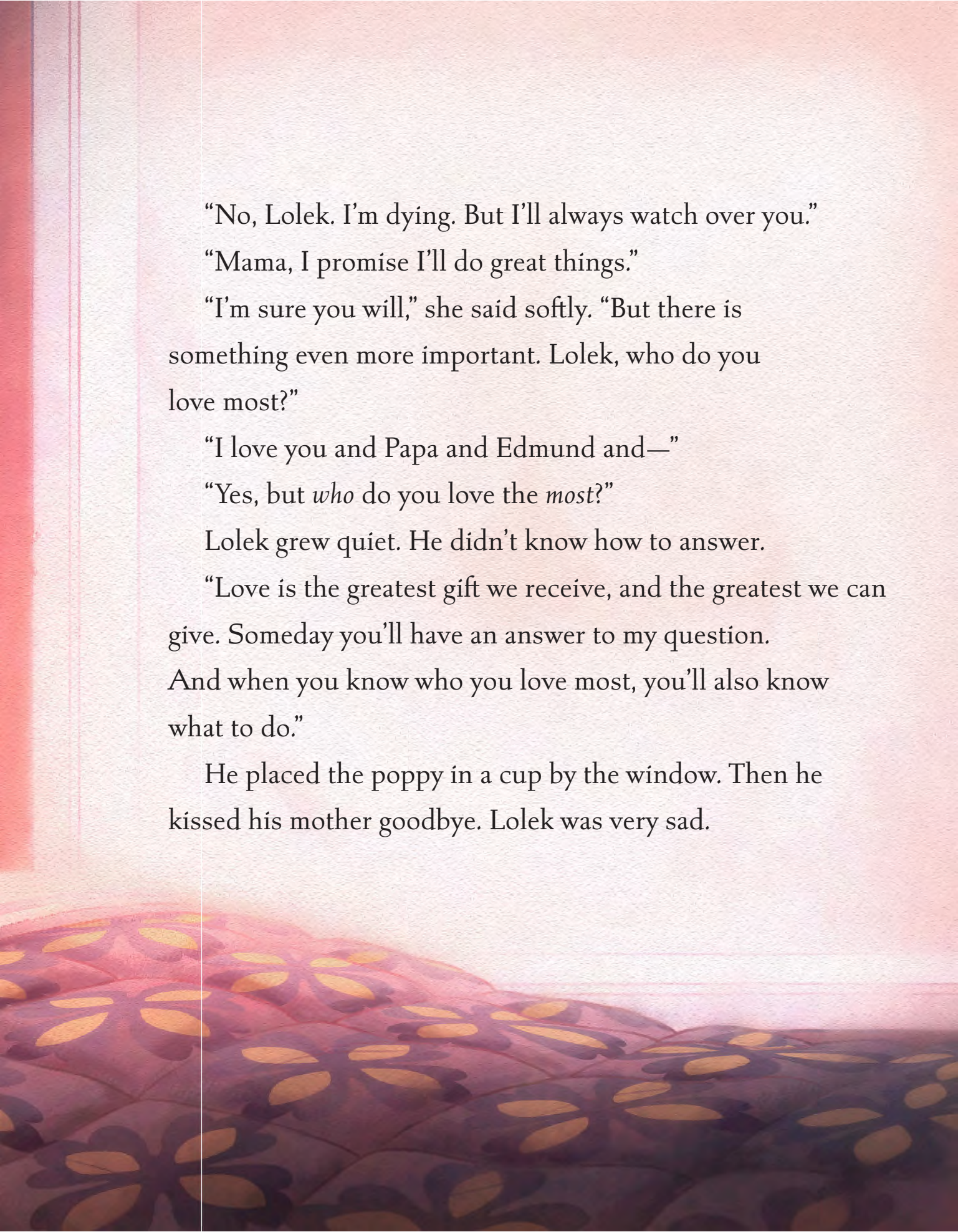
“I brought you a present,” he whispered.

She thanked him with a smile.

“Lolek, soon I am going to meet God,” his mother said with a tear in her eye.

“You won't be coming back, Mama, will you?”





“No, Lolek. I’m dying. But I’ll always watch over you.”

“Mama, I promise I’ll do great things.”

“I’m sure you will,” she said softly. “But there is something even more important. Lolek, who do you love most?”

“I love you and Papa and Edmund and—”

“Yes, but *who* do you love the *most*?”

Lolek grew quiet. He didn’t know how to answer.

“Love is the greatest gift we receive, and the greatest we can give. Someday you’ll have an answer to my question. And when you know who you love most, you’ll also know what to do.”

He placed the poppy in a cup by the window. Then he kissed his mother goodbye. Lolek was very sad.