

On Bl. John Paul's first feast, sister begins spreading his charism :: Catholic News Agency (CNA)

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Sr. Bernadette Pike reads the second reading during the May 1, 2011 beatification of John Paul II

Washington D.C., Oct 22, 2011 / 06:42 am ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- On Oct. 22, the first “John Paul II sister” will launch a year-long series of talks on the life, charism and spirituality of Blessed Pope John Paul II.

“Over a number of years, I’ve been preparing a lot of material that relates to John Paul II’s charism and his spirituality and his writings in different areas,” Sr. Bernadette Pike, MG, told CNA on Oct. 21.

Her series of talks, entitled “Living the Legacy,” is intended to present this

information to lay people who are interested in living after the example of the late pontiff.

As a John Paul II sister, Sr. Bernadette is a member of the broader group, the Missionaries of the Gospel. The community is still in its very early stages, with its first members still receiving their own formation.

The Oct. 22 launch date for her talks was chosen to correspond with the first official celebration of Bl. John Paul II’s feast day in some dioceses.

The possibility of adding the feast day of Bl. John Paul II to the Church calendar for the United States will be discussed at the upcoming November meeting of the U.S. bishops.

Until then, it is up to each bishop to decide if the feast day will be celebrated in their diocese. Several dioceses, including Rome, Krakow and Washington, D.C., will celebrate Oct. 22, 2011 as the first official memorial of Bl. John Paul II.

Sr. Bernadette hopes that her talks will offer listeners “a deeper insight into where the Holy Father was coming from and what the Holy Spirit was trying to do through him in order to renew the Church.”

The international talks, which will be given bi-weekly for a year, will not yet be broadcast publicly but will instead be held through a video conference. Sr. Bernadette said that she has sent a link to the conference to people across the world who have expressed interest in participating in it.

Originally from Australia, Sr. Bernadette said the idea of the John Paul II sisters was initially proposed in 2004.

Archbishop Barry James Hickey of Perth, Australia was supportive of the idea, but over the course of several months of discussion and prayer, it was determined that the community should include more than just the sisters. Lay men and women had expressed interest in living after the example of John Paul II, and a discussion of establishing the John Paul II priests and brothers had also arisen.

The decision was made that a larger community should be established to encompass the various groups wishing to live the charism of John Paul II. With the guidance of Archbishop Hickey, the Missionaries of the Gospel were officially established on June 23, 2007.

Sr. Bernadette made her final vows as the first John Paul II sister on Oct. 16, 2008. Two other women who had been in formation with her became ill and had to leave the community.

Although Sr. Bernadette is now the only John Paul II sister, she said that she is in contact with several other women who are interested in joining the community.

Currently, Sr. Bernadette is living in Washington, D.C., where she has been sent to study at the Institute for the Psychological Sciences for two years. She explained that she is in a program that integrates psychology, philosophy and theology with the intent of gaining a fuller understanding of the human person in order to better evangelize and form people in the way that John Paul II did.

Sr. Bernadette said her own initial encounters with John Paul II took place through other people. She said that she was particularly struck by the stories and pictures of her friends who had gone to Rome for World Youth Day in 2000.

She was impressed by the Pope's way of "personally relating to people and being present with them and bringing Christ to them in such a relevant, tangible way."

At the time, Sr. Bernadette was returning to her faith. She said that her encounters with the Pope through her friends helped her to "experience Christ" and grow deeper in her faith.

As she learned more about John Paul II, she realized that she was drawn toward his "thought and his way of doing things" and wanted to spend her whole life shaping and forming people in the way that he did.

When Sr. Bernadette met John Paul II in 2004, her appreciation for him was already strong. She spoke of the incredible experience of simply seeing "his way of being with others and with God."

At the Pope's beatification on May 1, 2011, Sr. Bernadette read the second reading.

She believes that the legacy of Pope John Paul II will reach far into the future of the Church. "I think it will completely revolutionize the way the Church does everything," she said.

"I know that's a really bold statement," she added, explaining that she believes that people have only begun to understand "the gift that the Church received through John Paul II."

More information about the Missionaries of the Gospel can be found at: <http://www.mg.org.au>