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**STATEMENT OF METROPOLITAN BASIL
ON THE DEATH OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**

“It is with great sadness that we learn of the ‘falling asleep in the Lord’ of our beloved Holy Father Pope John Paul II. His death is a great loss to the Catholic Church and indeed to the whole world.

“We remember fondly his great concern and love for the Eastern Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, and in particular his solicitous concern for the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States. He encouraged all Christians to breathe with both lungs – East and West.

“He is mourned by all peoples throughout the world – Christian, non-Christian, and by all other faiths. The Lord sent him as a gift to the Church, and this gift was shared with the entire world.

“On a personal level, I cherish my many private audiences with the Holy Father, both as Bishop of Parma and as the Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh.

“Grant, O Lord, eternal rest to your servant, Pope John Paul II. Eternal Memory! Christ is Risen!”