



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO PILGRIMS FROM SEREGNO

Saturday, 25 November 1978

Beloved Sons of Seregno,

I greet you all with particularly warm cordiality, beginning with my beloved brother Mons. Bernardo Citterio, Auxiliary Bishop of Milan and former priest of your parish, Mons. Luigi Gandini, the present parish priest, the municipal Authorities and then each of you, excluding no one.

I am happy at your presence and I thank you for it. The bond that ties me to you goes back to the already distant 1963, when I went to your town for the first time and celebrated Holy Mass in your collegiate church. That was just the first of a whole series of personal meetings or correspondence, in the course of these fifteen years.

It all began with the request that the parish priest of St Florian in Krakow and then I myself had addressed to the then Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal John Baptist Montini, to obtain for that church three new bells to replace the preceding ones, lost during the war. It was precisely you of Seregno, with the grace of God and with your concrete Christian generosity, who made this wish come true, manifesting in this way also your disinterested ecclesial communion. Now the bells that ring in Krakow from the church of St Florian, the Patron Saint of that beloved Archdiocese, sing also of your brotherly solicitude and testify to that bond of mutual love that must always characterize the Church of Christ.

Up to now there had been a sincere regret in my heart: when in August 1973 you came on pilgrimage to Krakow I was not able to receive you, because I was absent owing to pastoral commitments. I am therefore deeply happy today to make up for having missed you then by receiving you here most willingly and with deep benevolence. This time, however, you meet in my humble person no longer the Bishop of Krakow but the Bishop of Rome, who is therefore Peter's

Successor himself and so a sign of the unity of the whole Church founded by Christ. That does not diminish, but on the contrary increases my gratitude to you.

I wish to exhort you to one thing: continue also with other exemplary initiatives in your commitment of communion with the great Catholic Community scattered all over the world. Then, as Paul already assured the Christians of Greece, who took an interest, even a material one, in those of Jerusalem, God "will multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness, (2 Cor 9: 10).

The object of my wish for your parish community and for each of you is this: that with the help of the Lord you will be able to grow more and more in the intensity of a Christian life, which is based on staunch faith and which flourishes in the beauty of love. Only in this way does one become lamps on a stand, effective witnesses to the Gospel before men, "that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

With these wishes and with the assurance of a special prayer, I willingly grant you the most ample Apostolic Blessing, to be extended also to your families and your fellow parishioners who have remained at home, as a token of lasting and ever fruitful heavenly protection.

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