



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

### **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II DURING HIS VISIT TO THE PARISH OF SAINT ZYGMUNT**

*Częstochowa, 4 June 1979*

1. It is with real joy that I step on to the threshold of this parish which, together with the whole Diocese of Częstochowa, is awaiting the coming visit of the image of Our Lady of Jasna Góra.

After it has left the primatial See of Gniezno, it will begin its visit among you. And therefore already today I wish to greet the Mother of the visit in this new stage of her pilgrimage throughout the land of Poland. I do this in cordial spiritual union with my beloved Brother of the Diocese of Częstochowa, with the Bishops who assist him here with all the pastors and diocesan and religious priests, and with the beloved Sisters of so many religious Congregations. I do this with the heart of all God's people throughout the world who are particularly aware of the presence of Our Lady of Jasna Góra.

2. The visit of the image of Jasna Góra, in the faithful copy of it blessed by the Holy Father Pius XII in 1957, has over twenty years of history. In the summer of 1957 the image began to visit each parish, one after another, going from the Archdiocese of Warsaw to the Diocese of Siedlce, to that of Łomża, to the Archdiocese of Białystok, to the Lake Region and Pomerania, to the Dioceses of Warmia, Gdańsk and Chełmno; then to the area that was the administrature of Gorzów but is now divided into the three Dioceses of Szczecin-Kamiń, Koszalin-Kołobrzeg and Gorzów, within the new boundaries. The visit of the pilgrim image next continued in Silesia—in the Archdiocese of Wrocław and the Diocese of Opole. Then it reached the Diocese of Katowice and the other southern dioceses, namely the Archdiocese of Kraków, the Dioceses of Tarnów and Przemyśl and the territory of the Archdiocese of Lubaczów, and then the Dioceses of Lublin and Sandomierz. After visiting the Diocese of Kielce, the image proceeded to the Diocese of Drohiczyń and that of Łódź, and then turned north to the Dioceses of Włocławek and Płock. From Płock the series of

visits passed to the Archdiocese of Poznań and finally to that of Gniezno. Today the Diocese of Czestochowa is added, constituting as it were the last link in that magnificent chain.

I have listed all the stopping places on the visit of the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Jasna Góra, because each one of them developed the blessed idea from which the Servant of God Pope Pius XII and the Polish Episcopate drew inspiration when undertaking twenty years ago this religious practice.

3. I greeted Our Lady of Jasna Góra in her pilgrimage at various stopping places. I did so especially during its visit to the parishes and communities of the People of God in the Archdiocese of Krakow, of which I was the pastor.

Today I wish to greet her, in the inscrutable design of Providence, as the Successor of all the Popes who have lived during this period, from Pius XII to John XXIII, to Paul VI, to John Paul I. I greet Mary, thanking her for all the graces of each stage of the visit. By my personal pastoral experience I know how great and extraordinary are these graces. Through the visits of the pilgrim image of Jasna Góra, in its faithful copy, there has been as it were the start of a new chapter in the history of Our Lady of Jasna Góra in the land of Poland.

This visit has given tangible expression to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that is contained above all in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. These visits have shown what is the real maternal presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of his Church. Going forth from her shrine of Jasna Góra to visit each diocese and each parish in Poland, Mary has shown herself to all of us in a Special way as our Mother. For a mother does not wait at home for her children: she follows them wherever they stay. Wherever they live or work or form their families, wherever they are pinned to a bed of pain, even on whatever path they have strayed, where they are forgetful of God and weighed down by guilt.

I wish therefore today, together with all of you present here, to express immense thankfulness for all of that. I wish to be the principal echo of all hearts, of all families, and communities, of all the pastors, priests and bishops. Of everybody.

At the same time, when I spiritually greet Mary in her pilgrim image at her entrance into every parish of the Diocese of Czestochowa—as the chain of the visit is passed to the Bishop of the Church of Czestochowa with his Brothers in the Episcopate, with the pastors, the priests, the religious families and all the People of God—I wish to be the messenger of a great expectation and an ardent hope. Your hearts are full of this expectation. Mary herself through her image is bringing you the hope. Was not the moment of the Annunciation in Nazareth a great turning point in the history of mankind? Did not Mary bring hope to the house of Zechariah when she went to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth? In our own difficult times did not Pope Pad VI call the Mother of God the beginning of a better world? Did not Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish "knight" of the

Immaculate, also feel the same mystery?

May Mary's stay in every parish of your Diocese of Czestochowa be blessed.

As the Servant of God Pius XII did at the beginning, so today, at the last stage of the pilgrimage of the image of Jasna Góra, I, his unworthy Successor, I, Pope John Paul II, a son of the Polish Nation, wholeheartedly bless those who welcome Mary.

I place this present greeting and blessing in the hands of the Bishop of Czestochowa, so that it may be read—as is customary during the visit to the individual parishes.

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