



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

**MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE MASS MEDIA**

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Krakow

Sunday, 10 June 1979

Dear Friends,

We have already met in other places far from here, but even though the successor of Peter is at home in any part of the world—since his commission is to "all nations" (Mt 28:19)—it gives me very special satisfaction and pleasure to meet you and open my arms to you here on the soil of the beloved land of my birth. I pray that great new enrichment of the spirit and a profound inner peace may have been granted to you in the shrines and holy places where the faith of the Polish people finds intense expression.

Making pilgrimages is a very traditional practice among us Christians. Particular places are regarded as specially sacred because of the holiness and virtue achieved by individuals who lived there; and their sacredness increases with the passage of time, through the prayers and sacrifices of the pilgrim multitudes who visit them. So virtue generates further virtue, grace attracts grace; and the goodness of one saintly man or woman, held in permanent remembrance by a whole people, continues to transmit itself down through the centuries, bringing refreshment, inspiration and healing to the spirit of succeeding generations. And thus we are helped and encouraged in the difficult ascent to goodness of life.

You may perhaps recall that one of my first desires on becoming Pope was to make a pilgrimage to the shrines of the national Patrons of Italy, Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Catherine of Siena.

I felt the need to enlist the help of these great saints and to seek at their shrines the resolution and guidance which my formidable new task demanded. But I felt a deep need also to have my spirit fortified by a pilgrimage to the holy places of my homeland; and I thank God for his goodness in allowing me to make it, especially for making it possible in this particular year when Poland celebrates the ninth centenary of its chief Patron, Saint Stanislaus.

And now, at the moment of my departure, I thank you, my friends of the media, for having been with me on my pilgrimage. I thank you and the various agencies of communication which you represent for having—I think I can say—brought the whole world to Poland, to be by my side and share with me these precious days of prayer—and homecoming. And as I express to you my deep debt of gratitude, I would ask you to tell the world, tell the peoples of all your countries, that John Paul II remembered them, held them in his heart, prayed for them, at every step of this pilgrimage: at the shrines of the Blessed Mother of God in Warsaw, Czestochowa, Nowy Targ and Makow; at the tombs of Saint Wojciech and Saint Stanislaus in Gniezno and Krakow; at the sanctuary of the Holy Cross in Mogila, and in the cell at Oswiecim where Blessed Maximilian Kolbe spent his last heroic hours. Tell them—for it is true—that the Pope prays for them every day, many times every day, wherever he is; and that he trusts they pray for him.

A word now, specially for you, professionals of the press and the photo agencies, of the radio and television and cinema. More and more, as I observe you going about your work, I am struck by the nobility of the task with which you are charged by your vocation and profession. I said to you on another occasion ([Mexico, January 1979](#)) that when you provide information that is "full, consistent, accurate and true" you enable every man and woman to be "a partner in the business of the human race" (*Commuio et Progressio*, 39, 14). Ideally, your lives are dedicated to the service of the truth. As long as you are faithful to that ideal, you are deserving of the respect and gratitude of every person. I would remind you of something Jesus Christ said when he was on trial for his life—it was the only plea he offered in his own defence: "for this was I born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18:37). Apply this, each of you to your own life, and you will find it softens the pain and strengthens your courage in most of life's trials and frustrations.

This is the thought I leave with you until we meet again. Take my greetings and my thanks to your families, and my special love to the children. As I say goodbye to you—and to Poland—I bless you with all my heart.

