



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II DURING THE ARRIVAL CEREMONY FROM POLAND AT ROME'S CIAMPINO AIRPORT

10 June 1979 Mr. President of the Council of Ministers, Please accept my grateful appreciation of the noble words with which in your own name and on behalf of the Government and the whole nation you have welcomed me on my return to Italy. The Pope has visited his native land, the place in which he came to the light of day and the light of faith, where he consecrated himself to Christ and the Church, and now he returns to his See, where the Lord has placed him to guide and confirm his brethren; to Rome the city chosen by Providence to be the dwelling-place of the vicar of Christ himself. I thank God for having been able to see Poland again, that blessed and fertile land in which I put down my roots as man, as a priest and as a bishop, drawing from it rich and life-giving nourishment. I thank him with great fervour for having brought me back here, where my spirit wishes to make its home and become daily more identified with the universal mission entrusted to me. One motherland, my native one, has prepared me and sent me back to the other one, the larger one, the Catholic one, which embraces, as does my service, the whole world. I am happy to be able to express at this moment the profound happiness in my heart at having been able to take part in the centenary celebrations of the martyrdom of Saint Stanislaus. Warsaw, Gniezno, Czestochowa and Krakow, the stopping-places of my pilgrimage, have been moments of joyous communion, friendship, constructive talks and especially of prayer. The deep and intimate emotions of the various meetings have blended together in my soul, and have enriched it with a new and gratifying experience that is a pure grace of the Most High. Before my eyes I have recollected, peaceful and praying crowds of brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, my fellow-countryman, who have wished to make their tribute of devoted affection to him who is a son of the same country, but above all the visible Head of the Church, the Successor of Peter. The faith of Poland is a living and vibrant reality, a reality in which I would like to enable you to share. Like all genuine expressions of faith, it contains a message of optimism and hope: "Christ... having I been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no more power over him" (Rom 6:9). This secure affirmation of Saint Paul, with which I ended my greeting to the Polish faithful in the Cathedral in Warsaw, I now pass on to you, and through you to beloved Rome and to Italy, as a message of salvation that finds ever new confirmation in ourselves, in society and in the fellowship of peoples, provided that faith in Christ inspires our responsible choices. At the conclusion of my journey, I am glad to renew my good wishes and greetings to the whole Polish Nation, the Polish Episcopate, led by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, and to send a renewed expression of cordial thanks to Representatives of the Authorities of the State for the consideration and attentiveness with which they welcomed and surrounded me. I would assure you that before the

venerated picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa I said a very special prayer for the destiny of Italy, and for the well-being, peaceful co-existence and serene prosperity of her citizens. In telling you this I wish to extend to all here present a respectful and cordial greeting, and I also express my lively gratitude: to the Cardinals; to the Italian civil and military Authorities, who with their deferential and spontaneous welcome have made my hour of return even happier; to the distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps, whose presence witnesses to the sharing of their various nations in the joy of my pilgrimage; to all of you who with your festive welcome have made me the gift of a genuine family atmosphere; to the personnel of the Aviation Company, and to all who have contributed to the excellent organization of the journey, making it both comfortable and attractive. For all of you the assurance of my affection and benevolence is signified by my Blessing, which I extend to the Eternal City and to the whole Catholic world. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana