



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARD
TO CARDINAL KAZIMIERZ SWIATEK
OF THE "FIDEI TESTIS" PRIZE**

Monday, 27 September 2004

*Venerable Brothers,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I am delighted to have this meeting that enables me personally to award to you, dear Cardinal Kazimierz Swiatek, the "*Fidei Testis*" prize conferred by the Paul VI Institute of Brescia, at the Symposium held recently for its 25th anniversary. I cordially greet the Cardinals Giovanni Battista Re, Paul Poupard, Georges Cottier, and the Bishops, [Giulio] Sanguineti and [Pasquale] Macchi, the priests and each one of you, distinguished Members of the Board of Directors. I thank the President, Dr Giuseppe Camadini, for his courteous words.

In addressing you, venerable and esteemed Cardinal Swiatek, I would like to offer you my heartfelt congratulations on this prestigious recognition. The title of "*Fidei testis*" is in fact more appropriate than any other for a Christian: especially when he is an outstanding Pastor who has been raised to the rank of Cardinal and who bore a faithful and courageous witness to Christ and his Gospel in the difficult years of the persecution of the Church in Eastern Europe.

2. Your Eminence, you were ordained to the priesthood shortly before the beginning of the Second World War. Two years later, Providence called you to take the *Way of the Cross* of persecution, in solidarity with the passion of the Christian people entrusted to your care, yourself carrying the cross of prison, of unjust condemnation and of the work camps with their burden of exhaustion, cold and hunger. "Only with faith was it possible to survive", you confided. And the Lord granted you a strong, brave faith to overcome that long and harsh trial, at the end of which you returned to the Ecclesial Community as an even more credible witness of the Gospel: *Fidei testis*.

This new season of your life culminated in your appointment as Archbishop of Minsk-Mohilev, a ministry that you are still carrying out. With your words and example, you have proclaimed to all, believers and non-believers, the truth about Christ, a light that illumines every person.

3. You have done all this with the help of Mary Most Holy, *Mater Misericordiae*, as your episcopal motto also testifies. I entrust you to the Virgin with deep affection, venerable Brother, as I have the joy of awarding the "*Fidei Testis*" prize to you. And I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all, with renewed gratitude.