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Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra pays tribute in Poland to the nuncio Achille Ratti, future Pope Pius XI

Poland and the Holy See are celebrating the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, thanks to the work of the then-apostolic visitor and nuncio in that country, Archbishop Achille Ratti, the future Pope Pius XI. On this occasion, the Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State, Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, unveiled a statue and a mosaic dedicated to the pontiff today at the apostolic nunciature of Warsaw, delivering a speech in which he recalled the providential decision of Pope Benedict XV to appoint Bishop Ratti as apostolic visitor of Poland in April 1918.

“He was thus able to know the dramatic landscape of Eastern Europe, still devastated by the First World War, and to perceive the great thirst for freedom and the commitment of the Polish people, founded on love for their homeland and the spiritual values transmitted from generation to generation, along with the Christian religious tradition. Perhaps this experience was the source of the great sympathy with which he accompanied the resurgence of the Polish State after more than one hundred and twenty years of divisions and occupations on the part of neighbouring nations”.

The nuncio Ratti, in spite of the various difficulties related to the complex political situation, ideological and social divisions, and the anti-clerical tendencies of the socialist government, was esteemed as an attentive observer, always ready to point out the concerns and to call the political class to prudence in various matters, and as an assiduous mediator and friendly companion of the Church in Poland and of the entire nation.

“On the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Poland”, added Archbishop Peña Parra, “let us hope that the example of Achille Ratti may be a constant inspiration for our present and future relationships, so that we may always have a solid friendship, committed to promoting the common good and transmitting faith, love and hope to future generations”.

The Substitute for General Affairs then inaugurated, in the chapel of the nunciature, a mosaic entitled “Crucifixion and glory of the saints”, pronouncing a few words:

“Here manifests the *communio sanctorum*, the community of us, sinners who, trusting in the God’s mercy, aspire

to holiness, and those who in life have followed the Lord in the way of love unto the cross; here is the door that leads to the glory of the Father. Here we see, together with the Virgin, the holy confessors and martyrs who were born in this Polish land and who rendered it fruitful with their blood and with works of praise to God and charity for men. They are the luminous beacons of the history of this town, linked from the beginning to the history of the Church founded in Peter. Portrayed in this mosaic, in the chapel of the apostolic nunciature, they also indicate the deepest meaning of the diplomatic service of the representatives of the Holy See in a Christian country: to bear witness to Christ with commitment and holiness”.
