



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT
OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI
IN POLAND

ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER

FAREWELL CEREMONY

Kraków, 28 May 2006

*Mr President of the Republic of Poland,
My Venerable Brother, the Cardinal Archbishop of Kraków,
Beloved brothers and sisters!*

The time has come for me to say farewell to Poland. For four days I have passed through your country like a pilgrim, visiting places of particular importance for your historical and spiritual identity. Warsaw, Jasna Góra, Kraków, Wadowice, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Łagiewniki, Oświęcim – how many memories these names evoke! What a wealth of meaning they have for the Polish people!

When taking leave of his homeland for the last time four years ago, my beloved predecessor Pope John Paul II exhorted the Polish nation always to be guided by sentiments of mercy, fraternal solidarity, and dedication to the common good, and he expressed the firm conviction that in this way she would not only find her proper place within a United Europe, but would also enrich this continent and the whole world with her tradition. Today, as your presence in the family of European States is being constantly consolidated, I wish with my whole heart to repeat those words of hope. I ask you to remain faithful custodians of the Christian deposit, and to transmit it to future generations.

Dear Polish people! I want to confide in you that this pilgrimage, during which I have visited places

particularly dear to the great John Paul II, has brought me even closer to you, his compatriots. I thank you for the prayer with which you have surrounded me from the moment of my election. During my meetings with you, at audiences in the Vatican, I have often felt a bond of intense prayer and spontaneous sympathy. I would like you to continue to remember me in your prayers, asking the Lord to increase my strength in the service of the universal Church.

I thank the President of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Episcopate for the invitation. I thank the Prime Minister for the Government's fruitful co-operation with Church representatives in the preparation for this visit. I express my gratitude to the Authorities at every level for their hard work, both before and during my visit. I thank the representatives of the mass media for the efforts they have made to give ample coverage to this pilgrimage. My expressions of appreciation and gratitude are also extended to the services of public order, to the army, the police, the fire brigade, the healthcare teams and all those who have helped to make such a success of the Pope's encounter with Poland and its inhabitants.

I would like to conclude my visit with the words of the Apostle Paul which have accompanied my pilgrimage in Polish territory: "Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Cor 16:13-14). My blessing upon you all!

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