



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

HOLY MASS FOR THE SOLEMN CLOSING OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN SYNOD OF KRAKOW

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Wawel Cathedral, Krakow

8 June 1979

*Beloved Metropolitan of Krakow,
Revered Bishops,
Dearest brothers and sisters,*

1. Today the ardent desire of my heart is fulfilled. The Lord Jesus, who called me from this See of Saint Stanislaus, on the vigil of his ninth centenary, *permits me to participate at the closing of the Synod of the Archdiocese of Krakow*, a Synod that has always been bound, in my mind, to this great jubilee of our Church. All of you know this very well, because I have dealt with this theme many times, and so I have no need to repeat it today. Perhaps I would not even be capable of saying everything which, in relation to this Synod, has passed in my mind and in my heart—just what hopes and plans I have tied to it in this decisive period of the history of the Church and of the motherland.

The Synod has been linked, for me and for all of you, to the anniversary of the ninth centenary of the ministry of Saint Stanislaus, who for seven years was Bishop of Krakow. The work programme thus foresaw a period from 8 May 1972 to 8 May 1979. During this whole time, we wanted to honour the Bishop and Pastor (of nine centuries ago) of the Church in Krakow, and to try to express—according to our times and our needs—our concern for the salvific work of Christ in the souls of our contemporaries. Just as Saint Stanislaus of Szczepanow did it nine centuries ago, so too we want to do it nine centuries later. I am convinced that this way of honouring the memory of

the great Patron of Poland is the most suitable. It corresponds both to the historical mission of Saint Stanislaus and to those great tasks facing today's Church and modern Christianity after the [Second Vatican Council](#). The initiator of the Council, the Servant of God [John XXIII](#), specified this task with the word *aggiornamento*. The aim of the work of seven years of the Synod of Krakow—in response to the essential goals of [Vatican II](#)—was to be the *aggiornamento of the Church of Krakow, the renewal of the understanding of its salvific mission, as well as the exact programme for its accomplishment*.

2. The path that has led to this end has been marked out by the tradition of particular synods of the Church; suffice it to recall the two preceding synods during the ministry of Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha. The rules for conducting the synodal activity were laid out by the [Code of Canon Law](#). However, we have taken into consideration the fact that the teaching of the [Second Vatican Council](#) opens new perspectives here and, I would say, creates new tasks. If the Synod was to serve the realization of the teaching of [Vatican II](#), it was to do so above all with the same idea and with the same system of work. This explains the whole plan of the pastoral Synod and its subsequent realization. One can say that for the formulation of the resolutions and of the documents, we have travelled over *a longer*, but a *more complete* path. This path has passed through the activity of hundreds of *synodal study groups*, in which large numbers of the faithful of the Church of Krakow have been able to express themselves. These groups, as is well known, were in the greater part made up of Catholic lay people, who have had on the one hand the opportunity to penetrate deeply into the teaching of the Council, and on the other hand to express in this regard their own experiences, their own proposals that manifested their love for the Church, their sense of responsibility for the whole of the Church's life in the Archdiocese of Krakow.

During the preparatory stage of the final documents of the Synod, the study groups *became centres where extensive consultations took place*; in fact, the General Commission that coordinated the activity of all the working commissions turned to them, as did the commissions of experts that had been summoned right from the beginning of the Synod. In this way, those matters *matured*, which the Synod, linking itself again to the teaching of the Council, wished to transfer into the life of the Church of Krakow. It wished to form, in accordance with those matters, the future of the Church.

3. Today, all that work, this journey of seven years, *is already behind you*. I never thought that at the close of the work of the Synod of Krakow I would take part as a guest coming from Rome. But if such is the will of God, permit me, at this time, to assume once again the role of that Metropolitan of Krakow who through the Synod had wished to pay back the great debt which he had contracted towards the Council, towards the universal Church, towards the Holy Spirit. Permit me also in this role—as I have said—to *thank all the people who have built up this Synod, year after year, month after month, by their work, by their advice by their creative contributions, by their zeal*. In a way, my gratitude goes to the whole community of the People of God of the Archdiocese of Krakow, both ecclesiastics and laity: to the priests, to the men and women religious. Especially

to all here present: to the Bishops, headed by my revered successor as the Metropolitan of Krakow; in a particular way to Bishop Stanislaw Smolenski, who as chairman of the *General Commission* has directed the work of the Synod. To all the members of the Commission, and once again to the *Preparatory Commission*, which in 1971 and 1972, under the direction of Monsignor Prof. E. Florkowski, prepared the constitution, the regulations and the programme of the Synod. To the Working Commissions, the Commissions of Experts, to the tireless Secretariat, to the Editorial Groups, and finally to all the Study Groups.

In this circumstance, perhaps I ought to have spoken differently, but it is not possible for me. I have been too personally connected with this work.

I wish, then, in the name of all of you, to lay this finished work before the sarcophagus of Saint Stanislaus in the centre of the Cathedral of Wawel; the work had in fact been undertaken in view of his jubilee.

And together with all of you I ask the *Most Holy Trinity* that this work may bear fruit a hundredfold. Amen.

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