



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

### HOLY MASS AT THE SHRINE OF THE HOLY CROSS

#### *HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II*

*Mogila, 9 June 1979*

1. Here I am again in front of *this Cross*, where I have so often come as a pilgrim, in front of the Cross that has remained as the most precious relic of our Redeemer for all of us.

When, close to Krakow, Nowa Huta was springing up, an enormous industrial complex and a new city, a new Krakow, it may not have been noticed that *it was springing up beside this Cross*, this relic that we have inherited with the ancient Cistercian abbey from the time of the Piasts. It was the year 1222, the time of Prince Leszek Bialy, the time of Bishop Ivo Odrowaz, the period before the canonization of Saint Stanislaus. At that time, on the third centenary of our Baptism, the Cistercian abbey was founded here and *the relic of the Holy Cross* was then brought, and has been for centuries the goal of pilgrimages from the Krakow area, from Kielce to the north, from Tarnow to the east, and from Silesia to the west. All this occurred in a place where tradition says there once stood *Stara Huta*, as it were the ancient historic mother of the present-day Nowa Huta.

I wish to greet here once more the pilgrims from Krakow, those from Silesia, and those from the Diocese of Kielce.

Let us go together, pilgrims, to the Lord's Cross. With it begins a new era in human history. This is the time of grace, the time of salvation. *Through the Cross man* has been able to understand the meaning of his own destiny, of his life on earth. He has discovered how much God has loved him. He has discovered, and he continues to discover by the light of faith, how great is his own worth. *He has learnt to measure his own dignity by the measure of the Sacrifice* that God offered in his

Son for man's salvation: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

Even if times change, even if what was once countryside near Krakow has given way to the emergence of a huge industrial complex, even if we are living in an age of dizzy advances in the natural sciences and equally amazing advances in technology, nevertheless the truth about the life of the human spirit, which is expressed by means of the Cross, knows no decline, is always relevant, never grows old. *The history of Nowa Huta is also written* by means of the Cross—first by means of the ancient Cross of Mogila, the heritage of centuries, and then by means of the other Cross, the new one, which has been raised close by.

Where the Cross is raised, there is raised the sign that that place has now been reached by the Good News of Man's salvation through Love. Where the cross is raised, *there is the sign that evangelization has begun*. Once our fathers raised the Cross in various places in the land of Poland as a sign that the Gospel had arrived there, that there had been a beginning of the evangelization that was to continue without break until today. It was with this thought also that the first Cross was raised in Mogila, near Krakow, near Stara Huta.

The new wooden Cross was raised not far from here at the very time we were celebrating the Millennium. With it we were given *a sign* that on the threshold of the new millennium, in these new times, these new conditions of life, the Gospel is again being proclaimed. *A new evangelization* has begun, as if it were a new proclamation, even if in reality it is the same as ever. The Cross stands high over the revolving world.

Today, before the Cross of Mogila, the Cross of Nowa Huta, let us give thanks for the new beginning of evangelization that has been brought about here. And let us all pray that it may be as fruitful as the first evangelization—indeed, even more fruitful.

2. The new Cross that sprang up not far from the ancient relic of the Holy Cross in the Cistercian abbey proclaimed *the birth of the new church*. This birth is deeply engraved on my heart and, when I left the see of Saint Stanislaus for the see of Saint Peter, I took it with me as a new relic, a priceless relic of our time.

The new Cross appeared, when the land of the old countryside near Krakow that became the site of Nowa Huta saw *the arrival of new men to begin new work*. People did hard work here before that. They worked in the fields. The land was fertile and so they worked with pleasure. Some decades back industry began, great industry, heavy industry. People arrived here, coming from various places; they came to expend their energy here as workers in the iron industry.

It was they who brought with them the new Cross. It was they who raised it as a sign of their will to build a new church. This very Cross before which we are now standing. It was my good fortune, as

your Archbishop and Cardinal, to bless and consecrate in 1977 this church that was born from a new Cross.

*This church was born from the new work.* I would make bold to say that it was born from Nowa Huta. For we all know that man's work bears deeply engraved on it the mystery of the Cross, the law of the Cross. In it comes true what the Creator said after the fall of man: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen 3:19). Both the old work in the fields, which makes wheat grow, but also thorns and thistles, and the new work in the blast-furnaces and the new foundries are always *carried out "with the sweat of one's brow"*. The law of the Cross is engraved on man's *work*. It was with the sweat of his brow that the farmer worked. It is with the sweat of his brow that the iron-worker works. It is with the sweat of his brow—the terrible sweat of death—that Christ agonizes on the Cross.

The Cross cannot be separated from man's work. Christ cannot be separated from man's work. This has been confirmed here at Nowa Huta. This has been the start of the new evangelization at the beginning of the new millennium of Christianity in Poland. We have lived this new beginning together and I took it with me *from Krakow to Rome as a relic*.

Christianity and the Church have no fear of the world of work. They have no fear of the system based on work. The Pope has no fear of men of work. They have always been particularly close to him. He has come from their midst. He has come from the quarries of Zakrzówek, from the Solvay furnaces in Borek Falecki, and then from Nowa Huta. Through all these surroundings, through his own experience of work, I make bold to say that the Pope *learned the Gospel anew*. He noticed and became convinced that the problems being raised today about human labour are deeply engraved in the Gospel, that they cannot be fully solved without the Gospel.

The problems being raised today—and is it really only today?—about human labour do not, in fact, come down in the last analysis—I say this with respect for all the specialists—either to technology or even to economics but to a fundamental category: *the category of the dignity of work*, that is to say, of *the dignity of man*. Economics, technology and the many other specializations and disciplines have their justification for existing in that single essential category. If they fail to draw from that category and are shaped without reference to the dignity of human labour, they are in error, they are harmful, they are against man.

This fundamental category is *humanistic*. I make bold to say that this fundamental category, the category of work as a measure of the dignity of man, is *Christian*. We find it in its highest degree of intensity in Christ.

.Let this suffice, dear brothers. It was not on one occasion alone that I met you here as your Bishop and dealt more abundantly with all these themes. Today, as your guest, I must speak of them more concisely. But remember this one thing: Christ will never approve that man be

considered, or that man consider himself, *merely as a means of production*, or that he be appreciated, esteemed and valued in accordance with that principle. Christ will never approve of it. For that reason he had himself put on the Cross, as if on the great threshold of man's spiritual history, to oppose any form of degradation of man, including degradation by work. Christ remains before our eyes on his Cross, in order that each human being may be *aware of the strength that he has given him*: "he gave (them) power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12).

This must be remembered both by the worker and the employer, by the work system as well as by the system of remuneration; it must be remembered by the State, the nation, the Church.

When I was with you, I tried *to give witness to this*. Pray that I may continue to give that witness in the future also, all the more now that I am in Rome; pray that I may continue to give that witness before all the Church and before the modern world.

3. I am thinking with joy of the blessing of the magnificent church at *Mistrzejowice*, now that its building is well advanced. You all know that I remember the beginning of this work at Mistrzejowice, its very beginning; and all the stages of the building that followed. Together with you I go back in prayer and heart to *the tomb of Father Joseph*, of holy memory, the priest who began this work, putting all his strength into it and sacrificing all his young life on its altar. I thank all those who are continuing this work with so much love and perseverance.

At this moment my thoughts go also to the Krzeslawice Hills. The efforts of many years are slowly bearing fruit. With all my heart I bless this work and all the other churches rising or about to rise in this area and in the other constantly growing quarters.

From the Cross of Nowa Huta began the new evangelization, *the evangelization of the second Millennium*. This church is a witness and confirmation of it. It arose from a living awareness and responsible faith and must continue to serve that faith.

The evangelization of the new millennium must refer to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. It must be, as that Council taught, *a work shared* by bishops, priests, religious and laity, by parents and young people. The parish is not only a place where catechesis is given, it is also the living environment that must actualize it.

The church whose building you are bringing to a conclusion with so much effort but also with so much enthusiasm is rising in order that by its means *the Gospel of Christ may enter into the whole of your lives*. You have built the church; build your lives with the Gospel.

May Mary Queen of Poland and Blessed Maximilian Kolbe help you in this continually.

