



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO POLAND

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

St Stanislaus Chapel, Kraków's Wawel Cathedral

Thursday, 17 June 1999

"*Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me*" (Mt 25:40). Christ's words, with which the liturgy leads us into the mystery of today's memorial of St Brother Albert, acquire particular eloquence in Wawel Cathedral. Indeed, together with the tombs of the saints, rulers and national heroes, a story of love is hidden here, of that love which makes life for one's brethren a gift for Christ.

I give thanks to divine Providence because once again I have been able to visit the *confessio* of St Stanislaus, to offer here the sacrifice of thanksgiving for this ecclesial community, which the Bishop of Szczepanów has strengthened for an entire millennium with his pastoral ministry and his death by martyrdom. In a certain sense he initiated this history of love for man and for Christ which has been continually fulfilled among this people. From it also stems the *calendarium* of our life, our searching, our pilgrimage - both as individuals and as a community - to the encounter with Christ. I praise God that I was able to share in this great spiritual heritage, especially as Bishop of Kraków, and that I can draw strength and inspiration from this wealth as Bishop of Rome.

I would like to offer warm greetings to everyone taking part in this Eucharist. It would be difficult to name them all. They are people dear to me, members of the Government, representatives of various milieux with whom I was associated and who carry out important cultural, scientific and social roles in the nation's life.

In particular I would like to greet the seminarians of the major seminary of the Archdiocese of Kraków, the seminary which I too attended, although in a very unusual way. I am referring to the period of the occupation and that which followed. The period of the underground seminary. Afterwards there was a gradual normalization and I began my scholarly work connected with the

Theological Faculty of the Jagiellonian University. I am delighted with the vocations.

I am pleased that you have come and I thank God for the gift of vocation he has given you. During this Holy Mass I would like to entrust each of you to God and to ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which you need to preserve your vocation, to fulfil it with wisdom and love in the priesthood, and to make it a light for the world in the third millennium. Please bring my cordial greetings and my blessing to your brothers in all the Polish major seminaries, both diocesan and religious.

I cordially greet all who have gathered here - those to whom I have been tied for years by close friendship and those whom I may not know personally, but who offer me their kindness. I thank them with all my heart for coming, for the community we have formed around this tomb, the *confessio* of St Stanislaus, Poland's first patron. Praised be Jesus Christ!