



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

### RECITATION OF "THE CALL OF JASNA GORA"

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

*Czestochowa,*

*Tuesday, 5 June 1979*

1. "Mary, Queen of Poland, I am close to you, I remember you, watch!"

Within a short time we shall repeat these words which, from the time of the Great Novena in preparation for the Millennium of the Baptism, have become the call of Jasna Gora and of the Church in Poland.

I shall repeat them today with you as the pilgrim Pope in his native land.

How greatly these words *correspond to the invitation* which we hear so often in the Gospel: "Be watchful"! By answering this invitation of Christ himself we desire today, as every evening at the hour of the call of Jasna Gora, to say to Mary: "Mary, Queen of Poland, I am close to you, I remember you, I watch".

These words, simple yet forceful, express what it means to be a Christian in Poland at all times, but in a special way during this decisive millenary period of the history of the Church and of the nation. To be a Christian is to be watchful, as the soldier is watchful, as a mother is with her child, a doctor with his patient.

*To be watchful means to protect something of great value.*

On the occasion of the Millennium of the Baptism we have become aware, to an even greater

extent, of the great good which is our faith and of all that spiritual heritage which has come from it in the course of our history. To be watchful means to guard all of this. It means to have an acute awareness of the values which are inherent in the life of every human being, simply because he is a human being created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the Blood of Christ. *To be watchful means to remember all of this.* To remember it for ourselves and often even for others, for our fellow-citizens, for our neighbour.

2. We Must be watchful, dear brothers and sisters, we must be watchful and solicitous for the entire well-being of every man, because this is the great task incumbent on all of us. We cannot permit the loss of what is human, Polish, and Christian on this earth.

"Be sober, be watchful" (1 Pt 5:8), says Saint Peter; and I today, at the hour of the call of Jasna Gora, repeat his words. Indeed, I find myself here in order to watch with you in this hour and to show you how deeply I feel every threat against man, against the family and the nation. A threat that always has its source in our human weakness, in a fragile will and in a superficial way of looking at life. And therefore, fellow-countrymen, in this hour of particular sincerity, in this hour of the opening of our hearts before Our Lady of Jasna Gora, I am speaking to you about this, and this is what I am entrusting to you. Do not succumb to weakness!

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12: 21). If you see that your brother is falling, help him; do not leave him exposed to the risk! Sometimes it is difficult to support the other person, especially if "he is slipping from our hands". But can this be done? It is God himself, it is Christ himself who entrusts to us each one of our brothers and sisters, each one of our fellow-countrymen. saying "... as often as you did it for one of my least brethren, you did it for me" (Mt 25:40). Be careful not to make yourselves responsible for the sins of others! Christ addresses severe words to those who give scandal (cf. Mt 18:6-7). Reflect, therefore, dear brother or sister, in this hour of national sincerity, in the presence of the Mother and her heart full of love, whether you do not give scandal, whether you do not induce someone to evil, whether through a lack of responsibility you do not burden your conscience with vices and with bad habits that others contract because of you... the young people... perhaps your own children.

"Be sober, be watchful!"

To be watchful and to remember in this way is to stand next to Mary. I am close to you! I cannot be close to you, to Our Lady of Jasna Gora, unless I am watchful and I remember in this way. If I watch and I remember, then I am close to her. And because she has so penetrated into our hearts it is easier for us to be watchful and remember what is our heritage and our duty, *standing next to Mary.* "I am near you."

3. The call of Jasna Gora has not ceased to be our prayer and our programme! The prayer programme of all! May it be in particular the prayer and *the programme of Polish families!*

The family is the first and basic human community. It is a sphere of life, it is a sphere of love. The life of every society, nation and State depends on the family, on whether the family is a true sphere of life and love in their midst. Much has to be done; indeed, everything possible has to be done, to give to the family those means that it needs: means for employment, means for housing, means to support itself, care for life which has been conceived, social respect for fatherhood and motherhood, the joy given by children born into the world, the full right to education and at the same time the various types of help needed for education... Here is a vast and rich programme on which depends the future of the individual and of the nation.

How I desire today, my dear fellow-countrymen, how ardently I desire that in this programme there should be fulfilled day after day, year after year, the call of Jasna Gora, the prayer of Polish hearts.

How ardently I desire, I who owe my life, my faith, my language to a Polish family, that *the family should never cease to be strong with the strength of God*. May it overcome whatever weakens it or tears it asunder; may it overcome whatever does not permit it to be a true sphere of life and love. For this I pray for you now with the words of the call of Jasna Gora. And I wish to pray also in the future, repeating: "I am close to *you*, I remember you, I watch", until this cry before the Mother of God rebounds and becomes a reality where it is needed most.

Where, on fidelity to these words repeated at the end of the first Millennium there will depend to a great extent the new Millennium.

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