



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT OF JOHN PAUL II TO POLAND

***GREETING OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS GATHERED
IN THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF JASNA GÓRA***

Częstochowa

Thursday, 17 June 1999

1. *"You have been the Queen of Poland for centuries, O Mary! Intercede for us, O Mary!"*.

On the pilgrimage to my homeland I could not leave out the Shrine of Jasna Góra. This place is so dear to my heart and so dear to each of you, dear brothers and sisters. We are used to coming here and bringing our personal and family problems, as well as the vital issues of the nation, to the Mother of God's Son and our Mother, just as our ancestors did in every century.

We are used to telling everything to the One who is uniquely present in the mystery of Christ and the Church, and in the mystery of every person. Mary, as Mother of the Saviour, is also Mother of all the People of God and accompanies them on the paths of faith and of daily life. She is also the Mother of our nation, which has venerated her as its Queen for centuries.

I rejoice today for being able to come once again to this holy place, this special place of prayer, and to gaze closely upon the face of Our Mother. Through her "faith, charity and perfect union with Christ" (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 63), she has become our living model of holiness and love for the Church.

2. I cordially greet the Pauline Fathers, the guardians of this shrine, led by their Father General and Father Prior. I greet Archbishop Stanisław, Pastor of the Church of Częstochowa, Auxiliary Bishop Antoni, the diocesan and religious priests, sisters and all consecrated persons. With all my heart I greet Częstochowa's residents and the pilgrims who have come from various parts of Poland.

3. I come to Jasna Góra as a pilgrim to pay homage to Mary, Mother of Christ, to pray to her and to pray with her.

I would like to thank her for her protection during these days of my pastoral service to the Church of my homeland. Mary has been with us throughout this pilgrimage, interceding with her Son for spiritual gifts, so that we will be able to "do whatever he tells us" (cf. Jn 2:5).

I thank her for every spiritual and material blessing in Poland.

I entrust myself, the Church and all my compatriots to the maternal protection of Our Lady of Jasna Góra, without excluding anyone. To her I entrust every Polish heart, every home, every family. We are all her children. May Mary be an example and guide in our routine, daily work. May she help everyone to grow in the love of God and neighbour, to build the common good of our homeland, to establish and strengthen a just peace in our hearts and communities.

I implore you, Mother of Jasna Góra, Queen of Poland, to embrace my entire country with your maternal heart. Increase its courage and spiritual strength, so that it will be able to fulfil the great responsibility it faces. May the Polish nation cross the threshold of the third millennium with faith, hope and love, and adhere even more strongly to your Son, Jesus Christ, and to his Church, built on the foundation of the Apostles.

Our Mother of Jasna Góra, pray for us and guide us, so that we can bear witness to Christ, the Redeemer of every human being.

*"Take care of the whole nation which lives for your glory,
May it flourish and prosper, O Mary!"*