



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

FAREWELL CEREMONY AT BALICE AIRPORT

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Sunday, 10 June 1979

1. At this moment, I desire to express my most cordial thanks *for the hospitality* given to me. I realize how the word "hospitality" is full of fine feelings and at the same time how much, in this case, it includes hard work, how many hidden problems, how much work of preparation, how many decisions, and finally how much effort for its realization. So, with the ancient Polish expression, I say: "Bog zaplac"—May God reward you—and "Thank you". I keep in the depths of my heart all the visits I have made and all the people who have contributed to them, and I address, above all, my sentiments of gratitude to the State authorities and to the regional authorities of the city of Krakow. "May God reward" the venerable Polish Episcopal Conference, headed by the Cardinal Primate, the Metropolitan of Krakow, and the Bishop Secretary. "May God reward" everyone.

2. The visit of the Pope to Poland is certainly *an unprecedented event*, not only for this century but also for the entire Millennium of Christian life in Poland—especially as it is the visit of a Polish Pope, who has the sacrosanct right to share the sentiments of his own nation. Such a sharing, in fact, is an integral part of his ministry to the whole Church as the Successor of Peter. This unprecedented event is undoubtedly an act of courage, both on the part of those who gave the invitation and on the part of the person who was invited. However, in our times, *such an act of courage is necessary*. It is necessary to have the courage to walk in the direction in which no one has walked before, just as once Simon needed the courage to journey from the lake of Gennesaret in Galilee towards Rome, a place unknown to him. Our times have great need of an act of witness openly expressing the desire to bring nations and regimes closer together, as an indispensable *condition for peace in the world*. Our times demand that we should not lock ourselves into the rigid boundaries of systems, but seek all that is necessary *for the good of man*, who must find everywhere the awareness and certainty of his authentic citizenship. I would have liked to say the awareness and certainty of his *pre-eminence* in whatever system of relations and powers. Thank you, then, for this visit, and I hope that it will prove useful and that in the future it will serve the aims and values that it had intended to accomplish. I take my leave of Krakow! I wish it a new youth! I express the wish that it may remain for the Polish people, for Europe and for the world that magnificent witness of the history of the nation and of the Church that it is now; I express the wish that the cultural

heritage enclosed within its walls may continue to speak with its unique contents. I take leave of Poland! I take leave of my native land! As I depart I kiss the ground, from which my heart can never be detached. May Almighty God bless you: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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