



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CITY OF WARSAW
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 60th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE WARSAW UPRISING**

*H.E. Mr Lech Kaczynski
President of the City of Warsaw
Capital of Poland*

Dear Mr President,

Thank you for inviting me to take part in the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. I wholeheartedly join the inhabitants of the Capital and all my compatriots in the solemn commemoration of the dramatic days that were, in a certain way, the climax of the entire Nation's resistance to the Nazi occupation. As a son of this Nation, I would like to pay homage to the heroes of that August insurrection, to those who fell and to those who survived and are still alive.

I bow to the insurgents who spared neither their blood nor their lives in the unequal fight for the cause of their Homeland. Although they suffered military defeat in the end due to inappropriate means and external conditions, their gesture will live on for ever in the memory of the Nation as the loftiest expression of patriotism. What love for the Homeland those young people must have cherished in their hearts! Despite their young age - many had barely emerged from childhood and their whole life lay before them - they climbed the barricades in the name of freedom, their own and that of the whole community. In remembering them, I put my admiration into words and pay homage to the soldiers of the Home Army (Armia Krajowa) and the other military formations commanded by Colonel, later General, Antoni Chrusciel ("Monter"). They were helped by the civilians of Warsaw who died in tens of thousands on the battlefield. And how can we forget the priests, chaplains of the Uprising who helped the combatants to the very end, often at the cost of their own lives? I would like to pay a special tribute to the heroic women-doctors and the nurses who tended the combatants. Many of them were massacred with the injured whom they nursed

until the end. I hope that the memory of these heroic girls and women will live for ever, encouraging disinterested service to those in need.

When I think back to those events and to the people involved in them, I am under the impression that Warsaw, the Indomitable City, rebuilt from its ruins and just as splendid today as other European capitals, is an eloquent monument to their moral victory. As such it will stand for ever.

I cordially greet all those who lived through those days. Today they make up a senior group of witnesses of events marked by the greatness of the human spirit, capable of building the common good upon the highest values of individuals. Sixty years later, I am glad that they should be enjoying the fruits of their military action despite the previous attempts to cancel those events from the national memory.

I impart my Blessing to beloved Warsaw and to all of Poland. I ask God with his grace to make the hearts of all Poles more and more noble, so that the memory of their forebears' heroic deeds may be not only a return to remote history but also a stimulating example of patriotic love which, even in peacetime, is expressed by putting the common good before personal concerns.

I greet the President of Warsaw and all who are taking part in the celebrations for this anniversary. I convey to them my spiritual closeness and I warmly bless them all.

From Castel Gandolfo, 27 July 2004

JOHN PAUL II