



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE POLISH COMMUNITY IN MEXICO**

Saturday, 27 January 1979

May Jesus Christ be praised!

In the first place I would like to tell you that the Pope is always Catholic in addition to being, this time, Polish: and I am very pleased at the fact that this Catholic Pope is Polish.

I do not need to explain to you in detail why I am pleased.

At the same time, this fact that the Catholic Pope comes from Poland, or, as you say, is a "Polish Pope", lays special duties in the first place on me, and then on you, all Poles all over the world. It is not just a source of our joy, that in this way we can find a place in the heart of the Church, but also it brings with it tasks, which face the Church in Poland and the Poles scattered all over the world. For the Poles, wherever they may be in the world, maintain ties with their native country through the Church, through the memory of the Mother of God of Jasna Gora, through our patron saints, through the ties maintained thanks to the religious traditions with which the people have lived for a thousand years and still live. Therefore, this place of ours in the Church—numerous peoples and nations have their place in the Church—this place of ours, the place of Poland in the Church, is a particularly important one today. But by this very fact it has laid upon us new commitments of being even more "the Church", of being more with the Church: I would say, of considering the Church even more as our spiritual homeland.

I wish you all this heartily, my dear fellow countrymen, on the occasion of our meeting on Mexican

land. Yesterday, in the Cathedral, I referred to the sentence which already possesses the right of citizenship in the history of the Church and of Poland: "Polonia semper fidelis"; I also said: "Mexico 'semper fidelis'." I consider it a providential event that my first steps outside Italy, outside Rome, during my pontificate, have brought me just here: to this land, where the inhabitants, Christian and Catholic citizens, have suffered so much for Christ. This unites us with them. They, too, feel this and express it in some way. Certainly, most of them do not know the history of Poland, just as we do not know the history of Mexico, which is shorter—you are an exception in this connection—but they feel that there is some spiritual bond between us, some similarity of our spiritual destiny; and the Mother of God of the Sanctuary of Guadalupe reminds us vividly of our Mother of God of Jasna Gora. And for this reason today, while waiting for the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Mother of God of Guadalupe, I experience the same sentiments, as when I used to go—and I hope that I will be able to go again in the not distant future—to the Sanctuary of the Mother of God of Jasna Gora at Czestochowa.

I will say even more, if I have had the boldness to undertake this journey to Mexico, already in the first months of my pontificate, in order to take part in this very difficult task, such as is the Conference of the Latin-American Bishops at Puebla, I have done so guided by confidence in the Mother of God, in her aid. As she helped me in Poland, at Krakow, so she will help me here, too, in Mexico, even though this is a different world, the New World, and people are different, but so close. I must confess that I am deeply moved by the welcome which the whole Mexican society and nation has given me, especially in this large city with twelve million inhabitants. I am confident that the Blessed Virgin will help me in the task which lies before us, before me. I believe that the experience I acquired during twenty years as bishop in Poland, will help me to see so many problems, still seething, fresh, unclarified, in the mentality of the people and perhaps even in the mentality of the priests of this continent, and will help me to find the simple, clear answer, expected by all. For this is the Pope's task: to speak simply and clearly, and thus strengthen his brothers.

I think I have finished. I think that you, who are my fellow countrymen, united with the Pope in a special way, will keep watch with your prayers, with your thoughts, with your dedication, in order that here, in the Latin-American continent, in the centre of America, here in Mexico, this—as you say—Polish Pope of yours may pass the test as a really Catholic Pope.

This is all, I will say no more. Rather I would have liked to hear all that you would tell me about yourselves. It is true, that Poles can be found in all continents and probably in all countries. This is, it can be said, our fate, it could be said our mission, to be present among different peoples of the earth. I could certainly find out from you how you arrived here. I suppose that, in most cases, you were brought here by the events of the second World War. In any case, I am grateful to you for this meeting. You must excuse me for coming late; but the Pope is never late. He is never late, because he has always so much to do, and, in addition, because his secretary always watches over him; so even if he is delayed, he is not late.

I wish then to embrace you in my heart once more, and to bless you on this our Polish and Catholic way.

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