



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADAM MICKIEWICZ
UNIVERSITY OF POZNAN, POLAND**

Monday, 26 March 2001

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially thank you for coming. I greet Archbishop Juliusz and Bishop Marek. I welcome the university's distinguished professors, students and personnel. I thank the rector for the kind words he spoke to me.

You have come here as representatives of the entire community of the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan to honour me with the title of doctor of your praiseworthy university. I gratefully accept this privilege. Although my direct contacts with the University of Poznan have not been frequent, I have always felt connected to it. I have considered the scientific milieu created around it as an important centre for our nation's cultural formation in the broad sense. How can we forget at this moment the words spoken by Adam Poszwinski at the university's inauguration in 1919: "Our wish is that this school should produce not only skilled professionals, but citizens with a national heart and spirit, citizens with a very high sense of civic service, who understand their profession as a service to the nation"! If this is so, if concern for the nation's spiritual good is the fundamental principle of this *Alma Mater*, it can only be dear to me.

Today this spiritual good of the nation should be seen in the perspective of the unification of Europe. It would be difficult, from such a standpoint, to overestimate the role of the Piast athenaeum. I said in 1983 at Poznan that this city had a significant role in the formation of Polish culture, thus giving it the characteristic traits of the European West (cf. 20 June 1983). Your university, linked from its most distant origins to Bishop Jan Lubranski and later to Bishop Adam Konarski, has been actively and effectively involved in building bridges down to our day between the patrimony of the Piast dynasty, of the Jagie³³ionians and of successive eras, and the spirit of Europe. I hope that in the future the University of Poznan will continue to be a meeting point

between a Polish culture with a solid identity and a European culture that respects perennial values.

One more thought. I would not like the significance of this doctorate *honoris causa* to be limited to myself alone. I accept it as a sign of the creative coexistence of science and religion and of a fruitful cooperation between the scientific and ecclesiastical milieus. This sign seems all the more eloquent because the conferral of the degree was proposed by all the university's faculties. I am delighted that the Faculty of Theology is now among them. May this presence increasingly reveal the spiritual aspect of a science open to the infinite and, at the same time, may it help in the discovery of the solid, scientific foundations of belief.

I thank you again for your kindness. I ask you to express my cordial greetings to the university's professors, students and personnel who were unable to come here. They are all close to my heart and I remember them all in prayer. I ask God for an abundance of his blessings for you and for the entire community of the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan.