



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO POLAND (MAY 31-JUNE 10, 1997)
RECITATION OF THE ROSARY

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II *Ludzmierz — 7 June 1997*

1. "Queen of the Rosary, pray for us!"

On this first Saturday of the month, the memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we come here to the Shrine of Our Lady of Ludzmierz, Patroness of Podhale. And this is a place more worthy than ever to become today the church in which the faithful from all over the world gather with the Pope to say the Rosary. For almost six hundred years now successive generations of people from Podhale and from all over Poland have honoured here the Mother of God. And this veneration of Mary is indissolubly linked to the Rosary. The local people, distinguished for their simple and deep faith, have always had a sense of what a marvellous source of spiritual life the Rosary can be. For centuries, pilgrims with beads in hand would come from various walks of life — whole families and parishes — to learn from Mary love of Christ.

They chose in this way the best school, for in meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary we see through her eyes the mysteries of the Lord's life, his Passion, Death and Resurrection; we re-live them as she lived them in her Mother's heart. When we say the Rosary we speak to Mary, we confidently entrust to her all our concerns and sorrows, our joys and hopes. We ask her to help us to accept God's plans and to obtain from her Son the necessary grace to carry them out faithfully. She — joyous, sorrowful and glorious, always at her Son's side — is at the same time present in the midst of our everyday problems.

2. The rhythm of the Rosary measures time in this land of Podhale, of Krakow and of Poland, it pervades it and forms it. In whatever way human events developed — in joy for the fruits of daily work, in the painful battle with adversity or in the glory of victories won — they always found a reflection in the mysteries of Christ and his Mother. For this reason affection for the Rosary has never disappeared from the hearts of the faithful, and today it seems to be growing stronger still. This is clearly shown by the development of the "Fraternity of the Living Rosary", founded exactly

a hundred years ago in this place, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Ludzmierz. The testimony of those who in this simple prayer find an endless source of spiritual life attracts others. With joy I am told that this Fraternity has also moved beyond the borders of Poland and has even reached other continents. In many centres with Polish immigrants new Living Rosary groups are springing up. It is a wonderful work. I ask God to sustain it, that it may bear holy fruits in the hearts of all Poles, at home and abroad!

3. Today I wish to thank whole-heartedly the faithful of Podhale and the whole Archdiocese of Krakow for the great gift of the Rosary. I know that everyday you gather here at the feet of Mary, Our Lady of Ludzmierz, and in many other places, to commend to her protection the problems of the Successor of Peter and of the Church which Providence has placed in his care. I also know that in the parishes of Podhale, Orawa, Spisz, Pienini and Gorce you have likewise prayed for this visit of mine to Poland, gathering in families and joining in non-stop prayer in "Pilgrim Rosary" groups. I thank you for this marvellous work of prayer. I have always been able to count on it, especially in difficult moments. I need it so much and I continue to ask for it.

I cordially greet the whole parish community of Ludzmierz, its pastors and faithful. We can say that it has spread throughout the world. For wherever Polish mountain folk have gone and continue to go there is present also the Patroness of Ludzmierz — she is present in their homes and churches, but above all in their hearts. May her presence never be lacking!

I also wish to offer a special greeting to the Association of Large Families, present here to seek Mary's intercession for the happiness of their families, which is often not easily attained. In today's world you are witnesses to the happiness that comes from sharing love, even at the cost of many sacrifices. Do not be afraid to bear this witness! The world may not understand you, the world may ask you why you have not taken an easier path, but the world needs your witness — the world needs your love, your peace and your happiness. May you be sustained by Mary, the Protector of families. Turn to her as often as you can. Say the Rosary. May this prayer become the foundation of your unity.

There are present here priests and lay people who for many years have been conducting in this region the pastoral ministry promoting temperance. I commend to Mary, Our Lady of Ludzmierz, this work of yours. I pray that she will obtain for you a strong and persevering spirit, and also a spirit of great sensitivity and discretion towards every individual.

I look with admiration at this Shrine which has been much enlarged and has become more beautiful. This is a sign of your dedication and generosity. It is your gift to Mary, but also to the pilgrims who come here. It is right that the Pope — a pilgrim to Ludzmierz — should today thank you in the name of everyone for your hospitality. May God reward you! I cordially bless you all!

Our Lady of Ludzmierz, Patroness of Podhale, pray for us!

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