



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO POLAND

HOLY MASS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Warsaw, 3 June 1979

My very dear friends,

1. It is my ardent desire that today's meeting, which is marked by the presence of the university students, will be in keeping with the grandeur of the day and its liturgy.

*The university students of Warsaw and those of the other seats of learning in this central metropolitan region are the heirs of specific traditions going back through the generations to the mediaeval "scholars" connected principally with the Jagellonian University, the oldest university in Poland. Today every large city in Poland has its university. Warsaw has several. They bring together hundreds of thousands of students who are being trained in various branches of knowledge and are preparing for intellectual professions and *particularly important tasks in the life of the nation.**

I wish to greet all of you who have gathered here. I wish also to greet in you and through you all the university and academic world of Poland: all the higher institutes, the professors, the researchers, the students. I see in you, *in a certain sense*, my younger colleagues, because I too owe to the Polish university the basis of my intellectual formation. I had a systematic connection with the lecture halls of the faculty of philosophy and theology at Krakow and Lublin. *Pastoral care of those in the universities is something for which I have had a particular liking.* I therefore wish on this occasion to greet also all those who dedicate themselves to this pastoral care, the groups of the spiritual assistants of university students, and the Polish Episcopate's Commission for University Pastoral Care.

2. We are meeting today on *the Solemnity of Pentecost*. With the eyes of our faith we see appear before us the upper room in Jerusalem from which the Church came forth and in which the Church remains for ever. There it was that the Church was born as the living community of the People of God, as a community aware of its own mission in the history of man.

Today the Church prays: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love" (Liturgy of Pentecost). These words, so often repeated, today resound with particular ardour.

Fill the hearts.

Consider, young friends, *how great is the human heart*, if God alone can fill it with the Holy Spirit.

Through your university studies you see open up before you the wonderful world of human knowledge in its many branches. Step by step with this knowledge your self-awareness is certainly developing also. Assuredly you have long been putting the question to yourselves: "Who am I?" This is, I would say, the most interesting question. The fundamental query. What is to be the measurement for measuring man? That of the physical forces at his command? That of the senses that enable him to have contact with the external world? Or that of the intelligence obtained by means of the various tests or examinations?

Today's answer, the answer of the liturgy of Pentecost, points to two measurements: *Man must be measured by the measurement of his "heart"...* In Biblical language the heart means the inner spirituality of man; in particular it means *conscience*... Man must therefore be measured by the measurement of conscience, by the measurement of the spirit open to God. Only the Holy Spirit can "fill" this heart, that is to say, lead it to self-realization through love and wisdom.

3. Therefore let this meeting with you today in front of the upper room of our history, the history of the Church and of the nation, be above all, a prayer to obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As once my father placed a little book in my hand and pointed out to me *the prayer to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit*, so today I, who am also called "Father" by you, wish to pray with the university students of Warsaw and of Poland:

— for the gift of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety (that is to say the sense of the sacred value of life, of human dignity, of the sanctity of the human body and soul) and, finally, for the gift of the fear of God, of which the Psalmist says that it is the beginning of wisdom (cf. Ps 111:10).

Receive from me this prayer that my father taught me, and remain faithful to it. You will thus stay in the upper room of the Church, united with the deepest stream of its history.

4. Very much will depend on the measurement that each one of you will choose to use for your own life and your own humanity. You know well that there are different measurements. You know that there are many standards for appraising a human being, for judging him even during his studies and later in his professional work, his various personal contacts, etc.

Have the courage to accept the measurement that Christ gave us in the upper room of Pentecost and the upper room of our history.

Have the courage to look at your lives from a viewpoint that is close up and yet detached, accepting as truth what Saint Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now" (Rom 8:22). Do we not see this suffering before our eyes? "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom 8:19).

Creation is waiting not only for the Universities and the various higher institutes to prepare engineers, doctors, jurists, philologists, historians, men of letters, mathematicians and technicians: it is waiting for *the revealing of the sons of God*. It is waiting for this revealing from you, you who in the future will be doctors, technicians, jurists, professors...

Try to understand that the human being whom God created in his image and after his likeness is also called in Christ, in order that in him should be revealed what is from God, in order that in each one of us God himself should to some extent be revealed.

5. Reflect on this.

As I make my way along the route of my pilgrimage through Poland towards the tomb of Saint Wojciech (Adalbert) at Gniezno, to that of Saint Stanislaus at Krakow, to Jasna Gora—everywhere I will ask the Holy Spirit with all my heart to grant you:

such an awareness,
such a consciousness of the value and the meaning of life,
 such a future for you,
 such a future for Poland.

And pray for me, that the Holy Spirit may come to the aid of our weakness.

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