



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND

MEETING WITH SEMINARIANS AT THE SHRINE OF JASNA GORA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Czestochowa

Wednesday, 6 June 1979

My dear friends!

1. The Gospel which we often hear read when we are present here at Jasna Gora is that which recalls the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee. Saint John as an eye witness has described that event in all its particulars—an event which took place at the beginning of the public life of Christ the Lord. This is the first miracle—the first sign of the saving power of Christ—performed in the presence of his Mother and his first disciples, the future Apostles.

You also are gathered here *as disciples of Christ the Lord*. Each one of you has become his disciple through holy Baptism, which requires a solid preparation of our minds, our wills and our hearts. This is done *by means of catechesis*, first of all in our families, then in the parish. By catechesis we search ever more deeply into the mystery of Christ and we discover the meaning of our participation in it. Catechesis is not only learning religious concepts; it is an introduction to the life of participation in the mystery of Christ. Thus, knowing Christ—and through him also the Father: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9)—*we become, in the Holy Spirit, participants in the new life* which Christ has grafted into us from the moment of Baptism and which he has strengthened with Confirmation.

2. This new life which Christ has given us becomes our spiritual life, our interior life. We *therefore discover within ourselves the interior person with its qualities*, talents, worthy desires and ideals; but we also discover our weaknesses, our vices, our evil inclinations: selfishness, pride and sensuality. We perfectly understand how much the first of these aspects of our humanity needs to be developed and strengthened, and how much instead the second one must be overcome, combated and transformed. In this way—in living contact with Jesus, *the contact of the disciple*

with the Master—there begins and develops the most sublime activity of man: work on himself that aims at the formation of his own humanity. In our lives we prepare ourselves to perform various activities in one or other profession; our interior task, on the other hand, tends solely to form the human person himself—that human person which is each one of us.

This task is the most *personal collaboration with Jesus Christ*, similar to that which occurred in his disciples when he called them to intimate friendship with him.

3. Today's Gospel speaks of a banquet. We know that the Divine Master, calling us to collaborate with him—a collaboration which we as his disciples accept in order to become his apostles—invites us as he did at Cana of Galilee. In fact, he presents to us, as the Fathers of the Church have described in an expressive and symbolic way, two tables: one of the word of God, the other of the Eucharist. The work that we take on ourselves consists in approaching these two tables in order to be filled.

I know how many young people in Poland, boys and girls, who with joy, with trust, with an interior desire to know the truth and to find pure and beautiful love, approach the table of the word of God and the table of the Eucharist. On this occasion today I wish to emphasize the great significance of the various forms of that creative work which *allows us to discover the deep value of life*, the true attraction of youth, living in intimacy with Christ the master, in his sanctifying grace. One discovers in this way that human life, on whose threshold youth still finds itself, has a rich meaning and that it is—always and everywhere—a free and conscious *answer to the call of God*, a well-defined vocation.

4. Some of you have discovered that Christ has called you in a particular way to his exclusive service, and that he wishes to see you at the altar as his ministers, or on the path of evangelical consecration through the religious vows. This discovery of a vocation is followed by a particular preparation of some years either *in seminaries* or in *religious novitiates*. These institutions—worthy of praise in the life of the Church—never cease to attract young people who are ready to give themselves exclusively to the Redeemer, so that there is fulfilled what you so spontaneously sing: "Come with me to save the world, it is already the twentieth century..."

Remember that I rejoice for every priestly and religious vocation, *as a particular gift of Christ the Lord for the Church*, for the People of God, as a singular witness of the Christian vitality of our dioceses, parishes, families. Here, today, with you, I entrust every young vocation *to Our Lady of Jasna Gora* and I offer it to her as a particular gift.

5. During the banquet at Cana of Galilee, Mary asked the first sign from her Son on behalf of the young newly-weds and those in charge of the house. Mary does not cease to pray for you, for all the young people of Poland and of the whole world, so that there will be manifested in you *the sign* of a new presence of *Christ in history*.

And you, my dearest friends, remember well these words which the Mother of Christ spoke at Cana, turning to those who were to fill the water jars. She said then, pointing to her Son, "*Do whatever he tells you!*" (Jn 2:5).

To you also she says the same thing today.

Accept these words

Remember them.

.Put them into practice.

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