

Reports, forum

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7th Days of John Paul II

The seventh celebration of the Days of John Paul II was held between the 6th and the 8th of November 2012. This year's celebration was aimed at commemorating the figure of Blessed Pope and at popularising his heritage among the academic community of Cracow and the Małopolska region.

The decision to organise the first Days of John Paul II was taken in 2006 by the Council of Rectors of Cracow Universities. Both Cracow's universities and higher education institutions from the Małopolska Province took part in this project. Their activities carried out under the motto of *Truth* were coordinated by the then Pontifical Academy of Theology (today: the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow). Next the role of the main organiser was passed on successively to: the Cracow University of Economics (2007 – *Charity*), artistic schools from Cracow in cooperation – the Academy of Music in Cracow, the Ludwik Solski State Drama School in Cracow and the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow (2008 – *Beauty*), the Jagiellonian University (2009 – *Faith and Science*), the AGH University of Science and Technology (2010 – *Liberty*), and the Cracow University of Technology (2011 – *Dignity*). This year, our university was the chief organiser again.

Dialogue was the motto of this year's edition of the Days of John Paul II. There is no doubt that the topic was a perfect choice as the Polish Pope not only popularised the idea of dialogue but also practised it throughout his entire pontificate. He was open to dialogue with representatives of various religions, political options, age and social groups. He was always willing

to waive unnecessary formalities in order to have face to face contact with others. He knew how to find the right language of communication and listen attentively to what his interlocutors had to say. And all this was due to the fact that he believed dialogue is the most important element of peace and unity.

The vast group of organisers to which all Cracow universities belonged, also included: *Fides et ratio* International Academic Association, John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue, John Paul II Centre “Do Not Be Afraid” and state higher vocational colleges from the regions of Małopolska and Podkarpacie. The head of the organisational committee was Rev. Prof. Maciej Ostrowski, PhD, Vice-Rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow. Honorary patronage was held by: the Metropolitan Bishop of Cracow Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, Marshal of the Małopolska Province Marek Sowa and Mayor of Cracow Jacek Majchrowski.

The agenda of this year’s version of the Days of John Paul II was very extensive. It included literary and photographic competitions, discussion panels, concerts (e.g. by Psalmodia choir of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow that was held at the Church of the Holy Cross, exhibitions and theatrical performances). But each year the most important event is the international scientific symposium that was devoted this time to John Paul II’s concept of dialogue and inspirations derived from it. The symposium witnessed the participation of the community of theologians, philosophers, philologists, artists, academics specialising in social and political sciences. Archbishop Mieczysław Mokrzycki was the honorary guest. The sessions, which were open to the public were held on Wednesday, 7 November 2012, at the Assembly Hall of Collegium Novum of the Jagiellonian University.

A number of issues were raised in the papers presented and discussions conducted. The attitude of John Paul II to the intercultural dialogue was outlined. The position of dialogue in the social and political sphere and the rooting of the figure of the Polish Pope in popular music and amateur songs were demonstrated. The dialogue of art with eternity and the dialogue as salvation for a person were considered. The dialogue of Christianity with humanistic atheism was shown. John Paul II was depicted as a figure in the collective imagination of the 20th and 21st centuries. Sources and inspirations of Karol Wojtyła’s theatre were sought as well as his struggle with suffering and dying.

A literary competition for students that had always been connected with the motto of the edition and involved the analysis of philosophical, theological and literary texts by Karol Wojtyła combined with the creative extension of his thoughts became an indispensable element of the Days of John Paul II. Particular emphasis was laid on the knowledge of John Paul II's teachings and the author's independent concept. Among competition winners there were theology, philosophy, history, English philology and applied linguistics students from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and the Jesuit University Ignatianum. Winners were given prizes after the Holy Mass celebrated by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz at the Sanctuary of Blessed John Paul II in Cracow. The Promotion Department of the Cracow University of Technology organised a photographic competition for professionals and amateurs. Winners were granted pecuniary prizes and had their photographs exhibited at a vernissage.