

WE GIVE PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD THAT THE GOSPEL SEED HAS BORNE ABUNDANT FRUIT*

1. *Te Deum laudamus: te Dominum confitemur.
Te aeternum Patrem, omnis terra veneratur.*

“We praise you, O God, we acclaim you as the Lord.
Everlasting Father, all the world bows down before you”.

How great is the gift of divine Providence which today enables me, together with the Church in Cracow, to join in this hymn which, for centuries, heaven and earth have raised to the glory of their Creator, Lord and Father!

*Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia,
Patrem immensae maiestatis.*

“To the ends of the earth
your holy Church proclaims her faith in you:
Father, whose majesty is boundless”.

It is a great gift that, while the Church throughout the world gives thanks to God for the 2,000 years of her existence, at the same time the Church here in Cracow gives thanks for its own millennium! How can we not intone the solemn *Te Deum*, which today takes on a particular significance; it expresses the gratitude of entire generations of the city's inhabitants for everything that the community of the faithful has contributed to the life of the Cracow region. How can we not give thanks for that breath of the Spirit of Christ which from the Upper Room spread throughout the world and reached the banks of the Vistula, and continually renews the face of the earth – of this land of Cracow! We praise you, o God!

ROOTS OF FAITH ARE DEEPLY SET IN APOSTOLIC TRADITION

I extend a heartfelt greeting to all the people of the city. I greet Cardinal Franciszek, Auxiliary Bishops Jan and Kazimierz, as well as

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the Bishops emeritus, Stanisław and Albin. I warmly embrace all the priests, consecrated men and women, students of the major seminary, and lay catechists. I also extend greetings to the provincial and city authorities. I cordially greet you, brothers and sisters, who have come together in Błonia Krakowskie, to join the Pope in celebrating this Eucharist for the millennium. I greet all those who are with us through radio and television. I address words of special gratitude to the sick. The offering of your suffering, which you present in union with Christ every day for all mankind, for the Church and for the Pope, is of great value in God's eyes. On the threshold of the third millennium, may it be the crowning of our praise and our petition for forgiveness and of our pleas.

*2. Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus
Te prophetarum laudabilis numerus,
Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.*

“The glorious band of apostles,
the noble company of prophets,
the white-robed army who shed their blood for Christ
all sing your praise”.

Today *the apostles, prophets and martyrs* give praise to God. At the end of the first millennium they reached the banks of the Vistula and spread the seed of the Gospel. Following the battle of Mieszko in 966, many witnesses came into the land of the Piasts, among whom Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, became the most famous. According to tradition, before reaching the Baltic, where he endured a martyr's death, he stopped in Cracow and proclaimed the Good News here. It seems that he preached on the spot where, after his death, a church dedicated to him was built, which still exists today. Adalbert's apostolic activity and his martyrdom are also linked in another way to the beginnings of the Church in Cracow. Near his tomb arose the metropolitan see of Gniezno, which included the episcopal sees of Kołobrzeg, Wrocław and Cracow. At Gdańsk, we gave thanks to God in a particular way for the life and work of this great patron of Poland, and it is right that in Cracow also we should gratefully recall his witness and martyrdom which have been a beacon of light for 1000 years.

Finally, at the dawn of the history of this Church, the flame of the pastoral ministry and heroic death of St Stanislaus was lit. When we hear in today's liturgy the words of Christ: “I am the good shepherd” (Jn 10:11), we realize that through the work of this saint these words are closely bound up with the history of the Church in Cracow. His heroic concern for the Lord's flock, for the lost sheep in need of help, became the model to which the Church in this city for centuries faith-

fully turned for inspiration. From generation to generation, the tradition of unshakeable perseverance in respecting God's law and, at the same time, in showing great love for man was passed on – this tradition came to birth at the tomb of the Bishop St Stanislaus of Szczepanów.

If today we return to the beginnings and to these figures, we do so to renew our awareness that the roots of the Church in Cracow are profoundly fixed in the *apostolic tradition*, in the *prophetic mission* and in the *witness of martyrdom*. Entire generations made this tradition, mission and martyrdom their own, and built their faith on them in the course of a millennium. Thanks to this point of reference, the Church in Cracow has always been *in close union with the universal Church*, and at the same time it developed *its own historical character* and wrote its own history as a unique and unrepeatable community of men and women sharing in the saving mission of Christ.

3. By staying in the current of the universal Church and simultaneously preserving its own unique character, this community gave shape to the history and culture of the city of Cracow, of the region and, it is possible to say, of the whole of Poland. What can witness more eloquently to this than Wawel Cathedral? Today, while the voice of the Zygmunt bell seems to invite people to visit this mother church of Cracow, this treasure of the history of the Church and the nation, let us go there on a spiritual pilgrimage. Let us stand in the midst of its builders and ask them what foundation did they lay under this construction to enable it to survive good times and bad, to give refuge to saints and heroes, shepherds and sovereigns, statesmen, creators of culture and entire generations of inhabitants of this city. *Christ, who died and has risen, is he not its cornerstone?* Let us kneel before the tabernacle in the Batory chapel, before the black Crucifix of Hedwig, near the *confessio* of St Stanislaus, let us go down into the crypt of St Leonard and rediscover the unique history of the Church of Cracow, which is joined with that of the city and the country. And every church, every religious chapel seems to tell the same story: it is due to the 1,000-year presence of the Church that the *seed of the Gospel* scattered here has borne abundant fruit in the history of this city at the foot of Wawel.

GOSPEL FIDELITY CALLS FOR SERVICE TO THOSE IN NEED

Does not the *Alma Mater* of Cracow confirm this? Was it not for love of Christ and obedience to his call to proclaim the Gospel to the nations that in the heart of St Hedwig, the Queen, there arose the desire to found the Faculty of Theology and to raise the Academy of

Cracow to the rank of university? The fame of this university has been for centuries a source of pride for the Church in Cracow. From it emerged scholars of the calibre of St John Kanty, Piotr Wysz, Paweł Włodkowic and others, who exercised great influence over the development of theological thought in the universal Church. How can we not mention Nicolaus Copernicus, Stanisław of Skalmierz, Jan Kochanowski and all the hosts of those who grew in wisdom and, having loved truth, goodness and beauty, *testified in various ways to having found in God their definitive crowning*? What would Cracow be without this fruit of St Hedwig's faith and wisdom?

The grafting of the Church onto the history of this city took place not only in the churches, royal palaces and university halls, but wherever *fidelity to the Gospel required the witness of service* to those in need. The ancient annals and modern chronicles have much to say about parish and religious schools, hospitals and orphanages; they report much about the works of mercy, big and small, which the people of Cracow accomplished, led by the enthusiasm of the preaching of Fr Piotr Skarga, the humble example of St Brother Albert, and many other witnesses of practical love; they say much about the Church's great concern for the life, freedom and dignity of every person which had to be shown, without sparing sacrifice, in the distant past but also at times close to our generation, in the times of war, the postwar torment and the period of transformation.

If we list today the fruit of 10 centuries of the existence of the Church in Cracow, we do so *to inflame our hearts with gratitude to God*, who in the course of this history has poured out countless graces upon his people. We must remember this goodness and exclaim with ever greater enthusiasm: "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory, for the sake of your love and your truth" (Ps 115:1), for what you have shown through the work of the Church in this land.

4. *Tu rex gloriae, Christe. Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.*

"You, Christ, are the king of glory,
Son of the eternal Father".

Today let us give glory to Christ. To him our hymn of praise is due. What value would the fruits of the Church's existence have if they were not the *revelation of the saving work of the Son of God*? When we heard proclaimed in today's Liturgy of the Word: "I am the good shepherd" (Jn 10:11), we discovered in a sense the most essential reason for our thanksgiving.

"I am the good shepherd, I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life

for the sheep" (Jn 10:14–15). Christ speaks in this way about himself. He in fact is the good shepherd. St Paul, in the Letter to the Ephesians, helps us in a sense to deepen our understanding of this description. The Apostle writes that God in his Son "chose us ... before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. *He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ*, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have *redemption through his blood*, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (1:4–7).

CHRIST CAME TO MULTIPLY THE NUMBER OF ADOPTIVE SONS

If Christ is the Good Shepherd, the unique Good Shepherd, and as such the King of all pastors in the Church, this is because *in him dwells the love which unites him to the Father*. Through this love is accomplished the *divine election*, which the Father made in man's regard before the creation of the world. The eternal and only-begotten Son of God, who became man precisely in the name of this love, is concerned with one thing only: *to multiply among men the number of adoptive sons who will respond to the Father's eternal election*. For this very reason he is the Good Shepherd. He offers his life to defend everyone from death, to increase life in them. This life is in him. By becoming man he brought this life into the world with himself, as the Father's gift. As the Good Shepherd, Christ's desire is to share this life, to bestow it on man, because only in this way – by sharing in God's life – can man, a mortal being, be freed from spiritual death. The liturgy of today's celebration shows us in a sense the deepest source of what the Church of Cracow has been on Polish soil for the past 1000 years. It is *the unique and never to be repeated accomplishment of the eternal plan of the Father*, who has filled this community of God's People with a boundless spiritual blessing through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

For this reason, while we listen today to Christ's parable of the Good Shepherd, we are aware that these words represent *a measure to be applied to the history of the Church*. Christ is the King of pastors, and down the centuries the pastors called by him have worked to bring about his kingdom. Thus through the parable of the Good Shepherd the 1000-year history of the Church in Cracow is revealed to us. *We see all those who shared in the prophetic, priestly and royal mission of Christ through this Church* – the entire People of God who during this millennium made up the Church in Cracow.

We see first those who, because of a special mandate of Christ, were shepherds of this People: the Bishops and priests. We see before

us St Stanislaus, Bl. Wincenty Kadłubek, Iwo Odrowąż, Piotr Wysz, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Bernard Maciejowski and Adam Stefan Sapieha; present before us are Jan Długosz, St John Kanty and Bl. Piotr Dańkowski, and many other Bishops and priests, who are not only remembered in the Church but also inscribed in the history of the nation and its culture. How can we not mention here the *religious orders!* Already at the time of St Stanislaus, the Benedictines established themselves here, a little later the Cistercians, and after them came other orders and congregations, which produced apostles and pastors like Piotr Skarga, St Jerome Odrowąż, Bl. Stanislaus Kazimierczyk, St Maximilian, St Raphael Kalinowski.

If we embrace in our thoughts and hearts today all those who laboured as pastors in this Church for the kingdom of Christ, in historical perspective we see not only the priests, but also countless hosts of lay people. Before our eyes appear sovereigns and statesmen, led by St Hedwig and St Casimir, and with them a simple maidservant, Bl. Aniela Salawa, and the teacher of the Polytechnic, the Servant of God Jerzy Ciesielski, and also entire generations of parents, teachers, professors and students, doctors and nurses, business people and employees, artisans and farmers – men and women of different circumstances and professions. We also see the men and women who offered their lives to God and neighbour in the religious orders. As we gaze upon the images of St Brother Albert and Bl. Sister Faustina, we know that, in a sense, they represent *all those who in some way reflected the parable of the Good Shepherd.*

All these men and women of the Church, whether known by name or anonymous, by their life, their holiness, their everyday work and their suffering, testified in this land that *God is love* and that with this love God embraces everyone and leads them on the paths of this world to a new life. *There is no greater reason than this for giving thanks* for the 1000-year history of the Church in the land of Cracow. There is no greater gift than the gift of *holiness* which this land has received from the hands of the Church over the past 10 centuries. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:3).

Today I feel called in a particular way to give thanks for this 1000-year old community of Christ’s pastors, clerics and lay people, because their witness to holiness and the environment of faith which they formed and continue to form in Cracow have made it possible, at the end of this millennium, for Christ’s exhortation: “Peter, feed my lambs” (Jn 21:15) to descend upon the banks of the Vistula, at the foot of Wawel Cathedral. It became possible for one man’s weakness to find support in the power of the perennial faith, hope and charity of

this land, and to give the response: "In the obedience of faith before Christ my Lord, entrusting myself to the Mother of Christ and of the Church, conscious of the great difficulty, I accept".

CHURCH CONTINUED TO WITNESS DESPITE PERSECUTION

5. *Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hereditati tuae!
Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum!*

"Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.
Rule them and uphold them for ever and ever".

Throughout its history, the Church of Cracow has survived many storms and many trials. To dwell only on this century, we know that in the first place it resisted the destructive force of war and occupation, and despite painful losses it upheld its dignity, thanks especially to the uncompromising attitude of the Prince Cardinal Adam Sapieha. In the half-century after the war, the Church faced new challenges brought on by communist totalitarianism and the atheistic ideology. The Church overcame the period of persecutions without ever losing the strength of its witness. At that time, *the profound unity of its parishes, pastors and faithful, the great work of the religious education of the young and the works of mercy* revealed themselves to be powerful supports, set on the foundation of a deep faith. In this regard, it is impossible not to recall my predecessor on the throne of St Stanislaus, Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak.

A special factor in the renewal of the Church of Cracow were the labours of the *Pastoral Synod of the Archdiocese* in the years 1972–1979. I recall that unprecedented commitment of the faithful in the synodal groups, in the work of the individual commissions and that deep reflection of the Church of Cracow on itself. It led to a great *examination of the past and present*, but with a simultaneous *look to the future*.

Now, as we give thanks for the past splendour of this Church, in the same spirit *we must look at today and tomorrow*. We must ask ourselves: What has our generation done with this great heritage? Does the People of God of this Church continue to live from the tradition of the apostles, the mission of the prophets and the blood of the martyrs?

We must give an answer to these questions. In accordance with this answer, we must plan for the future so that it will be seen that the treasure of faith, hope and charity, which our fathers kept in the midst of struggles and which they handed down to us, will not be *lost*

by this generation *lulled into sleep*, no longer as in the work of Wyspiański, *The Wedding*, by the dream of freedom, but by freedom itself. We bear a great responsibility for the development of faith, for the salvation of contemporary man and for the fate of the Church in the new millennium.

Hence, with St Paul, I ask you, brothers and sisters: take as your model the sound principles, in faith and love in Jesus Christ. Safeguard the deposit with the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you (cf. 2 Tm 1:13–14). Carry it into the third Christian millennium *with the pride and humility of witnesses*. Transmit to future generations the message of divine mercy, which in this city was made manifest to the world. At the end of the 20th century the world appears more than ever to be in need of such a message. Bring it into the new times as a promise of hope and pledge of salvation.

Merciful God, sustain the people of this land with your grace. Make the sons and daughters of this Church a generation of witnesses for future centuries. Ensure that in the power of the Holy Spirit the Church in Cracow and throughout the fatherland may continue the work of sanctification which you entrusted to it 1000 years ago.

*Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos,
quemadmodum speravimus in Te.
In Te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum.*

“May your mercy always be with us, Lord,
for we have hoped in you.
In you, Lord, we put our trust:
we shall not be put to shame”.

(–) *John Paul II*