The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ŁÓDŹ (POLAND)

Paul VI Audience Hall
Thursday, 28 April 2022

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, *dzień dobry*! [Good morning!]

I heartily welcome you to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, a few metres from the place of his martyrdom. Here we hear the clear and unceasing echo of his words: “Lord, you know that I love you” (cf. *Jn* 21:16). Here we are confronted with his strong and radical witness.

Your presence here is also a testimony. Testimony to your faith and your love for the Church. It is a beautiful manifestation of your spiritual stature and of your love for the Pope, to whom the Lord, in his infinite mercy, has today entrusted the ministry of Saint Peter.

I thank you for your desire to meet the Pope; for your numerous, varied and festive company; for your openness to the Pope’s Magisterium: I know that during the years of the Pastoral Synod of your diocese you read the documents of my Magisterium attentively. I thank you in particular for your prayers for the Pope’s intentions. I too pray for you, and I am ready to listen to you very carefully. This is the aim of the current course of the Synod of Bishops, on the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”. Its first stage, the diocesan stage, is now drawing to a close, also in your diocese. I hope that you have not only committed yourselves to this Synod, but that you have also already enjoyed the experience, rediscovering the beauty of ecclesial communion, of living the faith together, of taking mutual responsibility for one another, of sharing with others the experience of God, even with those who are apparently distant or think differently.

The pilgrimage is also a beautiful image of the synodal Church, which actually walks the ways of the Apostles *together*, as a family of sisters and brothers, from different parishes and different communities and ecclesial groups: priests and lay faithful, married and consecrated persons. There are many young people here, full of strength and enthusiasm, including many university students; there are scouts; there are also homeless and disabled people.

I am very glad that the civil authorities are with you: the president of the Regional Council, the Voivode and the mayor of the city of Łódź.

I feel great joy to see such a numerous representation of brothers and sisters belonging to other Christian Churches. I warmly greet the Orthodox bishop and the Calvinist bishop. I greet the members of the Łódź section of the Polish Ecumenical Council, present here with their president. I know that your presence here and your joint prayer in Rome form part of your continual and daily relations and ecumenical activities. Your communion in diversity is a sign of synodality: it is synodality in deeds.

Dear friends, you have come on pilgrimage to Rome to conclude the centenary Jubilee of your Diocese. During this Jubilee Year you have recalled the beginnings of your Church, especially your first Bishop, Wincenty Tymieniecki. He was a man of great mercy and great ecumenical sensitivity. Through his episcopal ministry the Holy Spirit has inscribed these two essential aspects of Christianity - mercy and ecumenism - in the “DNA” of your Church in Łódź, as a legacy and task for generations to come.

Today mercy requires great “imagination”. It has many faces, as many as there are wounded and fallen people. Each person bears some wound within him- or herself, though not all are visible. I heartily bless your works of charity, even those done personally and spontaneously. I bless those who open their minds and hearts, their homes and resources to the sick, the elderly, the unemployed, the homeless, the immigrants, all the poor, the suffering and the marginalized, and the children who need homes and families. It is in this way that the Church takes on her most evangelical face, that of the Good Samaritan, who does not want to and cannot be indifferent.

Bishop Tymieniecki knew how to unite in himself the courage of mercy and the courage of ecumenism. He chose the path of ecumenism long before the Catholic Church officially embarked on it. I urge you to keep alive in yourselves this courage of your first Pastor. To cherish ecumenical determination, remembering that ecumenism in the Church is not an optional or decorative thing, but an essential attitude. I encourage you to walk together, in theological reflection and evangelization, in common prayer and listening to the word of God, in the witness of fraternity. On this path you are building up the local society, which you proudly call the “community of the four cultures”.

The Jubilee is also an opportunity to make wishes. Therefore, it is my wish that you all come out of

the experience of the Jubilee renewed as a Church. Renewed and strengthened for *evangelization*. May the Holy Spirit help you to interpret the new challenges that time places before you; to discern the appropriate tools to face them. I wish you credibility, consistency and attractive force in witness, that you may experience and cultivate increasingly fraternal relations in your Church; to be a beautiful Church that lives in an “outgoing” way, that like leaven, ferments all the dough; that has the strength of the mustard seed, which is the smallest yet becomes a tree in which birds are able to nest (cf. *Mt* 13:32).

May the Lord bless you! May you be accompanied by the prayer and intercession of the Mother of God, of Saint Joseph – patron of the diocese – and of Saint Faustina, patroness of Łódź. Please, do not forget to pray for me. *Dziękuję*! [Thank you]

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