

## THE POPE

## Stefan Wysyznski, Obedient unto Death on a Cross

Warsaw, Poland (NC) — Following is the English translation released by the Vatican Press Office of Pope John Paul II's Polish-language homily at a Mass in St. John's Basilica in Warsaw June 16.

1. For us Christ became "Obedient unto death,

Even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and Bestowed on him the name which is above Every name"

We reread these words in the solemn moment of today's liturgy, before the Gospel, linking them to the singing of the Alleluia.

These words, in Paul's forceful summary, express what constitutes the mystery of redemption accomplished by Christ. "The humiliation" of the Son of God through his death on the cross and



"his exaltation" through the resurrection make up this mystery. Obedience to the Father even unto death and the reciprocal gift of the Father bestowed in the name of Christ to humanity and to the whole of creation make up this mystery. Redemption is a new creation. Creation was the first and fundamental gift bestowed by God on the world and on humanity. The redemption overcomes man's disobedience to his creator, it overcomes sin; Christ takes this sin upon himself on the cross, in order to establish through his obedience unto death a new and eternal covenant of God with man: the new range of gifts bestowed in the Holy Spirit, new life.

The Church is born of the mystery of the redemption and lives from it always. In this mystery she finds the most profound reason for her existence. This mystery she announces and preaches in the Gospel. This mystery she celebrates in the sacraments and above all in the Eucharist.

On March 25, 1983, there began the Year of the Redemption, as an extraordinary jubilee in the Church. In this way we wish to highlight — as in the year 1933 — a special anniversary of the redemption: then it was the 1,900th anniversary, and now it is the 1,950th.

2. The Church is celebrating this extraordinary jubilee of the Year of the Redemption both in Rome and throughout the world at the same time. I wish, therefore, through my present pilgrimage, to celebrate the Holy Year of Redemption together with my compatriots, together with the Church in Poland. All the liturgical functions performed by me in the context of this pilgrimage offer those taking part an opportunity to receive the supernatural gifts of the jubilee: forgiveness of sins and the remission of temporal punishment, naturally on the usual prescribed conditions.

Christ was obedient unto death for us so that we might have life and have it abundantly. I wish my pastoral service in my native land to contribute to this "abundance of life," which everyone receives from the Father in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. I wish it to contribute to that abundance of life which everyone has in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in his invisible working — the work of sanctification — Christ's salvific "going away" through his death and resurrection is continued even to the end of the world.

3. Today's Gospel bears witness to that "going away." We hear Jesus cry out in a loud voice: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" expressing the unfathomable depth of his salvific suffering. We are witnesses of how he "breathed his last" on the cross. We hear finally, after the Sabbath, what the women who came to the tomb heard: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him."

Through the words of the Gospel we are in close contact with the very center of the events through which the redemption of the world was accomplished. These events have passed into history, we are separated from them by 1,950 years. But the redemption of the world continues inexhaustibly and is always available a new to each person, to every man and woman. In a special way it is available to

those who suffer (and perhaps suffer more intensely because they cannot fully perceive the meaning of their own suffering and, even more, the meaning of their own existence).

Let us allow ourselves to be caught up in the mystery of the redemption. Like that centurion beneath the cross who at the moment of Christ's death confesses: "Truly this man was the Son of God." Let us allow ourselves to be caught up in the mystery of the redemption. We all stand beneath the cross. All humanity stands continually beneath the cross. Let us allow ourselves to be caught up in the mystery of redemption: the mystery of the Son of God. In it there is also fully revealed what is at times so difficult to solve — the mystery of man. And there is manifested through all his sufferings and humiliations, the supreme vocation of him — of man.

Together with all my compatriots — especially with those who are most acutely tasting the bitterness of disappointment, humiliation, suffering, of being deprived of their freedom, of being wronged, of having their dignity trampled upon, I stand beneath the cross of Christ, to celebrate on Polish soil the extraordinary jubilee of the year of the redemption.

I stand here and I know that, as once on Calvary, at the foot of this cross, there stands the mother of Christ.

4. The first stage of my pilgrimage to Jasna Gora, on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the image of the mother of Christ, leads to the cathedral of Warsaw, to the tomb of the great primate of the millennium, Cardinal Stefan Wysyznski.

I was not able to come to Warsaw for his funeral, on May 31, 1981, because of the attempt on my life on May 13, that resulted in some months in hospital.

Today, however, as I have been enabled to come to my homeland, I direct my first steps to his tomb. And I come to the altar of the cathedral of St. John to celebrate my first Mass on Polish soil for him. I celebrate it for the soul of the late Cardinal Stefan, but I celebrate this Holy Sacrifice with a deep sense of thanksgiving. I give thanks to divine providence that in the difficult period of our history, after the Second World War, in the transition from the first to the second millennium, we were given this primate, this man of God, this man so in love with the mother of God of Jasna Gora, this intrepid servant of the Church and of the homeland.

The first reading of today's liturgy evokes the image of the servant, in whom we recognize the prophetic figure of Christ. The late cardinal fixed his eyes on Christ as servant of our redemption. With deep emotion he performed, each Holy Thursday in this cathedral, the liturgy of the washing of feet, having in mind these words of the master: I have not come to be served, but to serve.

And when he was unable to exercise this episcopal ministry, he wrote with sorrow: "...Now for the third time I am living my terrible Holy Thursday... I do not give you to my disciples... Today my cathedral as primate is without its bishop, whom the Holy Spirit desired for the Church... The whole of my Holy Week is a Garden of Olives — once more..." We find these words in the "notes from prison" of Cardinal Stefan Wysyznski for the date March 29, 1956.

5. Today, together with you, dear brothers and sisters, together with his successor in the primatial See, with the bishops, the priests, the entire people of God of the capital and of Poland, I wish to give thanks for this providential service, rendered for many years by Cardinal Stefan Wysyznski, primate of Poland. He served humanity and the nation. He served the Church and the world, serving Christ through Mary. In his service and in his ministry he took as his model the one who — at the moment of her supreme divine election — called herself the handmaid of the Lord. The late primate made this service and this ministry the main strength of his pastoral task. He was strong in his service, a service conscious of the mission entrusted to him by the prince of pastors. His service made him strong — and with his service as primate he made the Church and the nation strong in the midst of the trials and experiences of history.

Today — together with you, close to his tomb, in the heart of Warsaw — I give thanks to the most blessed Trinity for this great service rendered by Cardinal Stefan

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Wysznski as primate and I ask that the fruits of that service may continue to endure in the hearts of the people throughout our homeland.

He was strong in his faith in God, who is the Lord of creation and the Lord of History, through Jesus Christ, crucified and risen... Still today he seems to speak to us with the words of the psalmist: "The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord."

He was strong in his faith in Christ, that cornerstone of salvation of each person, of humanity, of the nation. He did everything that this cornerstone might not be rejected by the people of our time, but rather might be reconsolidated as the foundation of the spiritual structure of the modern generations. Like the apostle Paul, the late primate too preached Christ crucified, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God before a world that in every age seeks other powers and other forms of wisdom.

In his "Notes" he left us the following prayer: "...All your paths are justice and truth. Sorrow is transformed into grateful love. Punishment ceases to be a penalty, because it is a medicine, offered with fatherly solicitude. Sadness, which makes the soul tremble, is the ploughing of the land before the new sowing. Solitude is looking at you closer at hand. Human anger is the school of silence and humility. Detachment from work is a greater commitment and an offering of the heart. The prison cell is a sign of the fact that we have no lasting dwelling here... Let no one think badly of you, Father, let no one reprove you for being too severe; for you are good, for your mercy is from age to age."

6. Let us give thanks to the most blessed Trinity for this evangelical and paschal heritage of Cardinal Stefan Wysyznski who ever stood beneath the cross of Christ together with Mary. "I have placed everything in the hands of Mary." In her regard he felt like the apostle John, like an adopted son, and like one in love with the mother of God, "a slave of love." In this giving without reserve he found his own spiritual freedom: Yes, he was a free man, and he taught us, his compatriots, true freedom. He was a tireless herald of the dignity of every person and of the good name of Poland among the nations of Europe and the world.

One could apply to him the words of the poet:

"Humbly I kneel,  
"To rise up as a strong worker for God.  
"When I arise, my voice will be the voice of the Lord...  
"My cry will be the cry of the whole homeland."  
(Juliusz Slowacki, "So Help me God")

Divine providence spared him the sad events associated with the date of Dec. 13, 1981. He went to the father on the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, and his funeral took place on the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was almost as if Our Lady of Jasna Gora wished to place a last earthly seal on the life of this primate who, together with the Polish episcopate, had invited her to visit all the dioceses and parishes of our homeland.

In giving thanks to the most blessed Trinity for the great service of the primate of the millennium, let us beg the king of ages that nothing may destroy this deep foundation that it was given to him to establish in the soul of the people of God throughout the land of Poland.

Interfaith Center  
Begun at RIT

Ground was broken last Wednesday for Rochester Institute of Technology's new Kilian J. and Caroline S. Schmitt Interfaith Center.

Faculty, staff, students and friends as well as area religious leaders attended.

Construction of the \$1.4 million center is expected to begin shortly, with its completion and dedication scheduled to coincide with graduation next summer, according to Dr. Fred Smith, RIT vice president for Student Affairs.

The 13,000-square-foot center, an addition to the east side of the College-Alumni Union, will have a 300-seat chapel, a small meditation

chapel, 10 offices for chaplains, meeting rooms and a lounge.

Special recognition was paid Mr. and Mrs. Schmitt, whose \$750,000 gift will cover half the construction cost. The donation is one of many gifts the Schmitts have given RIT. The latest commemorates an anniversary for Schmitt — he was graduated 50 years ago from RIT's predecessor, the Mechanics Institute. He is the retired president of United Schmitt Corp and chairman of the board of New York Allright Parking. He and Mrs. Schmitt are charter members of RIT's Nathaniel Rochester Society.

## Display Reaction 'Unmatched'

New York (NC) — Officials of the Metropolitan Museum of Art have declared its Vatican art exhibition, which closed June 12, a success.

"We remain thrilled with the experience," said museum director Philippe de Montebello. He said the usual exhibition at the museum sparks only an oc-

## New Officers

James D. Ryan, president of Ryc Management, Inc., a parishioner at St. Thomas More, has been elected president of St. John Fisher College's board of trustees. Frank M. Stotz, partner-in-charge of Price Waterhouse and a parishioner at St. Louis, has been elected vice president of the board.

casional letter of thanks, but the Vatican exhibition stimulated a daily flow of letters that was "unmatched in the history of the museum."

"The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art" will be shown next at the Art Institute of Chicago July 23-Oct. 16. It will then move to the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco for display from Nov. 19 until Feb. 19, 1984.

The exhibit includes 237 works showing the two main roles of the popes in the history of art, as patrons commissioning art and as collectors accumulating art of all periods. It marks the first time the Vatican has given permission for any significant number of its art works to be taken abroad.

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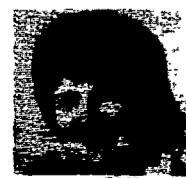
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