



The Holy See

CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS FOR THE POLISH COMMUNITY
IN THANKSGIVING FOR THE CANONIZATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Polish National Church of Saint Stanislaus, Rome

Third Sunday of Easter, 4 May 2014

Video

In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles we heard the voice of Peter, who with power announces the Resurrection of Jesus. Peter is a witness to hope in Christ. And in the Second Reading it is Peter again who confirms the faithful in faith in Christ, writing: "Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead... so that your faith and hope are in God" (Pet 1:21). Peter is the community's firm reference point, because he is founded on the Rock that is Christ. As was John Paul II, a true stone anchored to the great Rock.

One week after the Canonization of John XXIII and John Paul II, we are gathered in this church of the Poles in Rome to thank the Lord for the gift of the holy Bishop of Rome who was a son of your nation. This church to which he came more than 80 times! He always came here, at various times in his life and in the life of Poland. In times of sadness and dejection, when all seemed lost, he did not lose hope, because his faith and hope were fixed in God (cf. 1 Pet 1:21). And thus he was a foundation stone, a rock for this community that prays here, that listens to the Word here, prepares for the Sacraments and administers them, welcomes those in need, sings and celebrates, and from here returns to the outskirts of Rome....

Brothers and sisters, you belong to a people that has been severely tried throughout its history. The Polish people know well that in order to enter into glory one must pass through the Passion and the Cross (cf. Lk 24:26). And it knows it not because it has studied it, it knows it because it has lived it. St John Paul II, as a worthy son of his earthly fatherland, followed this path. He

followed it in an exemplary way, having received from God to be totally stripped of self. That is why his “flesh will dwell in hope” (cf. Acts 2:26; Ps 19:9).

And us? Are we ready to follow this road?

You, dear brethren, who today form the Polish Christian community in Rome, do you want to follow this road?

St Peter, also through the voice of John Paul II, tells you: Conduct yourselves with fear of God throughout the time of your exile here below (cf. 1 Pet 1:17). It is true, we are wayfarers, but we are not wanderers! On a journey, but we know where we are going! Wanderers do not know where. We are pilgrims, but not vagabonds — as St John Paul II would say.

At the outset the two disciples of Emmaus were wanderers, they did not know where they would end up, but on their return, not so! On their return they were witnesses of the hope that is Christ! For they had met Him, the Risen Wayfarer. This Jesus, he is the Risen Wayfarer who walks with us. Jesus is here today, he is among us. He is here in his Word, he is here on the altar, he walks with us, he is the Risen Wayfarer.

We too can become “risen wayfarers”, if his Word warms our hearts, and his Eucharist opens our eyes to faith and nourishes us with hope and charity. We too can walk beside our brothers and sisters who are downcast and in despair, and warm their hearts with the Gospel, and break with them the bread of brotherhood.

May St John Paul II help us to be “risen wayfarers”. Amen.