



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO MR MAREK BELKA
PRIME MINISTER OF POLAND***

Saturday, 30 October 2004

Mr Prime Minister,

Mr Minister,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

My cordial welcome to you all. I am pleased to be able to receive you at such an important time for Poland and for Europe. Yesterday the ceremony took place for the signing of the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union. It is an event that in a certain sense concludes the process of the widening of the Community to those States that have always cooperated in the formation of the fundamental spirituality and institutions of the Old Continent, but that during the last decades have remained, so to speak, on its borders. The Apostolic See and I personally have sought to support this process so that Europe would be able to breathe fully with both lungs: with the spirit of the West and of the East.

I am confident that, although no explicit reference is made in the European Constitution to the Christian roots of the culture of all the nations that today make up the Community, the perennial values based on the Gospel elaborated by the generations who preceded us will continue to inspire the efforts of those who will assume the responsibility for shaping the features of our Continent. I hope that this structure, which is basically a community of free nations, will not only do everything possible to ensure its spiritual patrimony, but will also preserve it as fundamental to unity. As I said in Gniezno in 1997, "It is impossible to build lasting unity... by separating oneself from the roots from which the nations and cultures of Europe have grown, and from the great wealth of the spiritual culture of past centuries". "There will be no European unity until it is based on unity of the Holy Spirit" (*Homily* in St Adalbert Square, 3 June 1997, nn. 5, 4; *L'Osservatore Romano*, 11 June 1997, p. 4). As the Pope, I am grateful to the Ministers and to the Polish Parliament for understanding this challenge and for responding to it. I thank the Prime Minister for the assurance, expressed in a letter, that "the Polish Government will strive to ensure that the new Constitution of the European Union will be in the spirit of the European values, at whose base there is a Christian vision of the human person and of politics as a dedicated service to man himself and to all the community". I wish, Mr Prime Minister, that the full commitment of all the persons to whom you have

entrusted a role in the Government of the Republic of Poland, as also of those who exercise legislative and judicial power with the participation of the entire society, will bear abundant fruit in the shortest time possible, for the prosperity of all Poles. May God guide our Fatherland towards a happy future, may he give the grace of wisdom to those on whom lies the grave responsibility for its future, and may he bless all its inhabitants!

Thank you for your visit and for every kindness.

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