

THE FRIENDS' 2006 PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND



A rock salt carving of the "Flight into Egypt" in the Wieliczka Salt Mine, near Krakow

Many books have been written about the life and times of Pope John Paul II. His impact on the Church and the world has been well documented. But it takes a visits to his homeland and birthplace in Poland to appreciate what an influence his pontificate has, and has had there. One wonders if it extends to the whole of Poland. It probably does.

Glorious sunshine added to the beauty of the country and our first impression of Krakow. The famous market square, Rynek Glowny; cheerful young people everywhere, including the well behaved students of the vast University. No litter, no hoodies, no lager louts—plenty of evidence that there is an in-built concern for the environment. And it shows.

Our first visit to St Mary's Church in the Square set the scene—repeated many times—of prayer and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in this most Catholic of countries. Time after time we encountered people at prayer, at any time of the day in every church we visited. No age gap here, young and old alike.

Our splendid chaplain, Fr. Nicholas Kavanagh, reminded us early on that St. Francis said to his followers "go out and preach wherever your go and if necessary use words!". If our Polish hosts used words we could not understand them, but there was no need. Prayer is part of their heritage. It is part of their culture. It is what people do!

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FRIENDS OF THE HOLY FATHER

THE FRIENDS' 2006 PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND (CONT'D)

Our excellent guide Marcellina explored with us the myths, legends and stories which abound. She led us through the tunnels of the salt mines to the extraordinary underground church, then took us on our walking tour of Krakow. She brought to life the history, the highs and lows of Poland with charm, enthusiasm and good humour.

We tried to absorb the horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau and prayed to St. Maximilian Kolbe for the millions of victims. We enjoyed the drama of Mass at Czestochowa where the icon of the Black Madonna was revealed with trumpet blast.

We noted the excitement at Wadowice, the



The death blocks at Auschwitz, where St Maximilian Kolbe died.

home-town of John Paul II, and many preparations being made for more pilgrims. Clearly it is not "if" he is canonized but "when"! All is being made ready.

We were amazed at the design of the church at Nova Huta "the Lord's Ark" and the claim that it is the largest parish in Europe with 100,000 parishioners and 25 priests!

We were overwhelmed by the vast congregation attending Holy Hour at 3:00pm on Sunday afternoon in the Church of Divine Mercy.

All in all a wonderful, humbling pilgrimage adding a new dimension to the Faith of all the pilgrims.



St Leonard's Chapel, Wavel Cathedral, Krakow, where Karol Wojtyla celebrated his first Mass.

John Sylvester

STATISTICS FROM THE VATICAN

Our recent gift of £42,000 to the Holy Father for further computerization equipment for the Vatican publishing House has assisted in the production of the two yearbooks that give information about the Universal Church.

The *Annuario Pontificio* is a "Who's Who" that provides names with biographies, whereas the *Annuario Statistico* shows the principal trends that mark the pastoral activity of the Catholic

Church in the different countries and various continents, including a concise quantitative analysis of changes that have taken place from 1978 to 2004.

The *Annuario Statistico* shows that from 1978 to 2004 there was a rapid increase in the number of Catholics by more than 45 per cent. In the same period they rose from almost 757 million to 1.098 billion—an increase of around 341

million faithful. However, the overall percentage remains much the same, compared to the demographic growth in the same period from 4.2 billion to 6.4 billion.

The importance for the renewal of pastoral activity depends on a series of factors, the most important being the number of priestly vocations, that is, of candidates to the priesthood, roughly calculated according to the number of students of philosophy and theology attending diocesan and religious seminaries.

Candidates across the world increased from 64,000 in 1978 to more than 113,000 in 2004, with an increase of about 77%, a marked upward trend. In relative terms, with regard to

the number of Catholics, greater dynamism was recorded in Asia and Africa with more than 257 candidates for the priesthood per million faithful in Asia and 150 per million in Africa. This contrasts with figures for Europe (84) and America (67) that show a decline.

By comparing the number of major seminarians per hundred priests, it is possible to form an idea of the potential for renewal of effective pastoral service down the generations. At a global level, from 15 candidates to the priesthood per hundred priests in 1978, the number rose to just short of 28 in 2004, largely thanks to the contributions of Asia and Africa.

VOCATIONS IN EUROPE

There are a hundred ordinands and permanent deacons currently studying at six seminaries of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, where 31 began studies last year and 27 in 2004. In Ireland around 80 priests are currently ordained annually, compared with 659 in 1965.

Vocations doubled in Poland after Pope John Paul II's election in 1978, peaking in 1985-7, defying trends elsewhere in Europe. Today there are 6,563 training for the priesthood in Poland, with about a third on average dropping out, providing around a third of European vocations.

Three years ago Scotland's first minister travelled to Poland to encourage immigrant workers to come and boost that country's falling population and the serious shortage of workers in the oil and gas industry. His efforts were almost immediately successful.

The two years since Poland joined the European Union has seen a mass influx of Poles to Great Britain and according to unofficial Home Office figures at any given time they number around half a million. Many are attracted to Scotland and there are now 5,000 Poles in Inverness and up to 6,000 in Aberdeen, joining the many Polish ex-service personnel who settled there after the Second World War.

This posed a dilemma for Bishop Peter Moran of Aberdeen who went to Poland last February on an urgent mission to bring Polish priests who are urgently needed to serve both Scottish Catholics and the new Polish arrivals in his diocese.

FRIENDS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE PIUS XII OPENED THE DOORS TO ROME'S JEWS

When Nazi Germany occupied Italy in 1943, SS policy was directed to the deportation of all Jews living in Rome to Auschwitz. It was due to the personal intervention of Pope Pius XII that this plan was largely thwarted.

From the evening of October 15 1943 to noon the following day, one thousand of Rome's 6,000 Jews were arrested and taken to a deportation centre. That same morning the Pope instructed Cardinal Maglione, his secretary of state, to protest to the German ambassador in the Vatican, Ernst von

*“to try to save
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Father, sad beyond
imagination, . . .”*

Weizsacker. Maglione acted at once, urging the ambassador “to try to save those innocent people. It is sad for the Holy Father, sad beyond imagination, that here in Rome, under the very eyes of the Common Father, so many people should suffer only because they belong to a specific race”. Weizsacker immediately gave orders for a halt to the arrests. To protect those who were thus still in their homes the Pope gave instructions for Vatican City to be opened to Rome's Jews, and for the convents and monasteries of Rome to provide hiding places and false identification papers for them. As a result of this papal initiative a larger percentage of Jews were saved in Rome than in any other city under German occupation. Of the 5,175 Roman Jews listed by the Germans for deportation 4,715 were given shelter in more than 150 Catholic institutions in the city. Of these, 477 were given sanctuary within the confines of the Vatican itself.

Of the thousand deportees of October 16 only 10 survived. The remaining 80% of Rome's Jews were alive at the liberation.

THE POPE'S NEWSPAPER—145TH ANNIVERSARY

After 145 busy years of service and fidelity to the Holy Father and the Church, *L'Osservatore Romano*—the Roman Chronicle—is regarded as the “most international” of dailies, in spite of carrying Rome's name in its title due to the Pope being Bishop of Rome. It has never ceased to promote Rome's universal vocation, thus from behind the Vatican Walls it has been able to look at the world with necessary detachment and objectivity.

Archbishop Giovanni Battista Montini of Milan in 1961, before his election as Pope Paul VI, commended the paper:

L'Osservatore Romano is a 'newspaper of ideas'. It is not, like many other newspa-

pers, merely a mouthpiece for news; it desires, I believe, to instruct. It does not only wish to provide information: it desires to be thought-provoking.

The first issue appeared on 1 July 1861 at the time when the 'Roman Question' emerged with the fight for the unification of Italy that culminated in the loss of the Papal States in 1870. Over the years it has featured all the great figures: popes; leaders such as Athenogoras, Gorbachev, Moro, Toaff; then events that have marked history in various ways: from the two Ecumenical Councils to the two World Wars; from the attack on Pope John Paul II to the fall of the Berlin

Wall; from the Holy Years of 1950 and 2000 to the attacks of 11 September 2001. Coverage includes important topics such as peace and dialogue.

In certain circumstances the paper has taken a lead role in history: for example, during the two World Wars *L'Osservatore Romano* was a free and independent voice (one of the few), and the only means of disseminating and explaining the Church's, and especially the pontiffs', earnest desire for peace.

The photographers at *L'Osservatore Romano* record the activities of the Holy Father and have built an archive of historic and little known photographs. Visitors can order cop-

ies of these including those of the Pope's weekly audiences, from their office in Vatican City.

The weekly English edition of the official Vatican newspaper can be obtained by annual subscription at £68 by surface mail or £90 by airmail, from:

The Catholic Truth Society

40-46 Harleyford Road

LONDON

SE11 5AY

Tel: 020 7620 0042

PILGRIMAGE FOR 2007: THE NORTH, THE EARLY SAINTS AND THE HOLY SEE



*Whitby
Abbey*

The Friends' pilgrimage to Northumbria is scheduled from Tuesday 11 September to Tuesday 18 September 2007.

Pope St Gregory sent Augustine to England in 597AD. One of the monks who accompanied St Augustine was St Paulinus who converted King Edwin of Northumbria when he married the daughter of King Ethelbert of Kent. Subsequently King Oswald of North-

umbria invited the Irish monk, Aidan, from Iona in the south west of Scotland to Lindisfrne to preach the Gospel to his people.

Other Northern Saints in whose footsteps we will follow include Cuthbert, Wilfrid, Hilda, Bede and Benedict Biscop, and we will visit evocative places associated with them such as Durham, Bamborough Castle, Yeavering, the Farne Islands, Wearmouth,

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Jarrow, Whitby and Lastingham.

Cardinal Basil Hume, a native of that part of England who became very familiar with these people and places and wrote a book about them called *Footprints of the Northern Saints*, is the inspiration for this pilgrimage.

Numbers will be limited and only one coach will be used to ensure the intimate and friendly nature of the pilgrimage.

If you would like to join this pilgrimage, or for further details, please write to:

Monsignor Ralph Brown

Flat 3

8 Morpeth Terrace

LONDON

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DAILY DECALOGUE OF POPE JOHN XXIII

“every believer in this world must be a spark of light . . .”

In his homily at a concelebrated Mass in St Peter’s Basilica to mark the anniversary of Pope John XXIII on 11 October, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, recalling the wealth of his teaching, focused on what is called *The Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII*:

1. Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once.
2. Only for today, I will take the greatest care of my appearance: I will dress modestly; I will not raise my voice; I will be courteous in my behaviour; I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or to discipline anyone but myself.
3. Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one.
4. Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes.
5. Only for today, I will devote 10 minutes of my time to some good reading, remembering that just as food is necessary to the life of the body, so good reading is necessary to the life of the soul.
6. Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about.
7. Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.
8. Only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it. And I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision.
9. Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world.
10. Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness. Indeed, for 12 hours I can certainly do what might cause me consternation were I to believe I had to do it all my life.

The Cardinal concluded: “every believer in this world must be a spark of light, a core of love, life giving leaven in the mass: and the

more he is so, he will live, in his innermost depths, in communion with God.”

INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

The world’s great Faiths have never been so entwined with politics, international relations, global economics, ethics and human rights, education and science, social cohesion and artistic freedom as now. It is imperative that we all follow the path of mutual respect and understanding. The Faiths are powerful

forces that affect all our lives, believers and non-believers alike, but our level of understanding of their traditions, and links between them, is generally poor. It is all too easy for stereotyping and media “shorthand” to spread and reinforce ignorance rather than build better understanding.

FHF Project for the Holy Land—a Centre for Peace

The Council of the FHF has agreed to assist with the refurbishment of a building on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, that has recently been given by the Holy See to the Order of Bridgettine Sisters, to serve as a Conference Centre with particular emphasis on ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue and also as a house of prayer.

Mother Tekla, the Abbess General, writes from the Casa di Santa Brigida, the order’s headquarters in Rome: *The invoices amount to \$310,000; I am sure Providence will come to our*



The house on the Mount of Olives



House on the Mount of Olives

aid because this will be a house where we can accomplish a lot of good . . . It was willed by the late John Paul II, but also by the present Holy Father Benedict XVI who is very pleased with this house where we, together with other religious who are there, will pray that the Lord gives us his peace. To God everything is possible!

We will launch an appeal soon and hope to find many generous benefactors to support this important initiative that is designed to foster inter-religious understanding. The Centre will also be used for charitable purposes for the needy.

British Library Exhibition—Summer 2007

The British Library in London holds the world's largest collection of sacred texts of the great Faiths. The Library is staging a major exhibition in response to the considerable interest in Faiths today, to help people understand more about the subject through interpretation of the collection, focusing initially on Judaism, Christianity and Islam with other Faiths featuring in the long term programme.

An introductory explanation to the Three Faiths will illustrate their core similarity: united by their belief in one God; The Abrahamic thread; the status of the line of Prophets from Abraham in each case. The essential characteristics of each Faith and some of the basic differences between them will be explained, such as the First and Second Covenants in Judaism; the Trinity, Resurrection and Communion in Christianity; the Five Pillars of Islam.

The approach will be thematic to show the commonalities and differences, with texts and artefacts from the Three Faiths displayed

alongside one another. In a quiet space exquisite examples of the Torah, the Christian Bible and the Qur'an will be displayed, with an explanation of each book: what it is and what it represents; the attitude of each Faith towards the holy books of the other Faiths and the links and common threads between the holy books of each Faith.

The power of the image will be explored and how the three traditions have influenced each other in the way sacred books have been produced and adorned with different attitudes towards illumination and illustration: how all three originally avoided decoration, how Christianity broke away (with the iconoclasm debate of the 8th century), the focus of Islam in calligraphy as the highest art form, and how the Torah scroll is always unadorned but contrasts with lavish illustration of other texts such as Haggadah.

FOR YOUR DIARY

The next Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Holy Father will take place on Wednesday 30 May 2007. The Mass beforehand will be celebrated at 5:30pm in Westminster Cathedral by Bishop Peter Doyle of Northampton.

A Happy and Holy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

FRIENDS OF THE HOLY FATHER

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Subscriptions

A subscription renewal notice is offered to those who do not renew by Banker's Order. Please act on it **now**. If you would like to renew by Banker's Order in future, please ask for a form. We would also be very grateful if taxpayers could complete a Gift Aid Form if you have not already done so.

Please remember that leaving a **legacy** to the FHF is a way of continuing your support for the Holy Father well into the future. We are a national charity (No. 280489) so your bequest is exempt from inheritance tax. It can be included in a new will or added in a codicil to your existing will.