

THE VISIT OF CARDINAL WOJTYLA

The visit of His Eminence Karol Cardinal Wojtyla was marked by a long talk which covered many areas of mutual concern between the Polish American community and the Polish Catholic Church.

**Remarks delivered by
Dr. Eugene Kusielewicz
on the occasion of a
visit of His Eminence
Karol Cardinal Wojtyla
to The Kosciuszko
Foundation, September
4, 1976.**

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Your Eminence to the Kosciuszko Foundation, which my predecessor, and founder of The Kosciuszko Foundation, the late Dr. Stephen P. Mizwa, liked to call the American Center for Polish Culture.

Our Foundation began fifty-one years ago. It was the dream of Stephen P. Mizwa to establish an institution that would promote cultural exchanges between the United States and Poland, and that would help to raise the educational level of the Po-

lish community. He went to the leaders of the Polish American community with his dream, to our clergy, to the heads of our fraternals, and to the editors of our press. They gave no help. If anything, they made problems from the start. "He went unto his own, but his own received him not."

But there were a number of Americans who understood the importance of such an institution. Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken, President of Vassar College; Samuel Vauclain, the President of the Baldwin Locomotive Works; Dr. Robert Howard Lord, Advisor on Polish Affairs to President Woodrow Wilson; Colonel Cedric Fauntleroy, Commander of the Kosciuszko Squadron that defended Lwow against the Bolsheviks in 1920; Willis H. Booth, Vice President of the Guaranty Trust Company; and Dr. Paul Mouroe, one of America's leading specialists on education. Six Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans and one Pole. They gave of their

time; they gave of their funds. And so The Kosciuszko Foundation was born.

From the beginning, the purpose of the Foundation was to serve all Poles, regardless of their religious or political beliefs. The purpose is a noble one, but in attempting to serve all, especially in a group like the Polish American community where differences are so deep, one can earn the hostility of all. We are one of the few groups that openly encourages cultural and educational exchanges with Poland. For this we are branded by a tiny group of World War II political emigres as communist sympathizers or dupes of the communists, and in Poland, there are those who look upon us as agents of the C.I.A. We have done more to help the Catholic University of Lublin than perhaps any other lay group in the United States. Yet we are critical of the cultural life of our Catholic parishes. For this we are branded anti-Catholic. We have helped many Polish Jews. Yet we

Remarks by His Eminence Cardinal Wojtyla*

Even though I had originally intended to speak about the question of education in Poland, the speeches which were delivered today have convinced me that, at least in part, I will have to address myself to the topics raised here. The speeches and discussions here reminded me very much of our three day conference at the Orchard Lake School. On the first day of that conference, the teachers at Orchard Lake referred to matters very much resembling those discussed today, though there were new matters raised here, and the speeches at Orchard Lake also emphasized points not stressed here. This is understandable since the speakers at the Orchard Lake Seminary were priests, while all the speakers here today are secular. This factor places the various problems in different perspectives.

On the second day of the conference, it was our turn to lead the discussion. The bishops from our visiting group discussed various topics and referred to the many aspects of the Church in Poland. The representatives of Polonia at the conference, not only from Orchard Lake, but lay persons and clergy from other parts of the US as well, listened to us and then asked questions. On the third day we gathered again to discuss and evaluate the preceding days' work and to draw conclusions from our discussions. I am bringing these matters to your attention to point out that our delegation of bishops has attempted to penetrate the problems of the Polish communities of America to understand them better. Were this visit a superficial event, unconscious of such essential matters, it would be pointless. These conferences pointed up difficulties which are disturbing to not only Polish American communities, the Kosciuszko Foundation and the Polish American intelligentsia, but also to the priests of Polonia, or at least those concentrated around the Seminary at Orchard Lake who conveyed these sentiments to us. Yet it is obvious that the mere analysis of these matters is not the goal itself. All the papers which I heard here as well as at Orchard Lake posed the question "How shall we act?" The direction of this ques-

tioning is to a certain extent practical. There is as well another question, linked to the first which strikes those of us here from Poland as particularly important, and that is "How can we cooperate?" Doubtlessly, this concerns us all. Polonia is a community which lives, survives and acts under American conditions and within the confines of American society. In relation to this, Polonia has to ask itself how it must act to forward its goals. One point becomes apparent on the basis of purely theoretical analysis, and that is, an understanding of deprivations in the past. The previous speakers, as well as those at Orchard Lake, tended to describe the existing state of affairs. Perhaps we should think a little bit more about why certain things did happen, and how the present is a consequence of the past. The way that we understood these problems from our experiences at the Orchard Lake Conference was that the history of Polonia is in a sense a painful testimony to the last two centuries of Polish history as well, since they are both interrelated. The Poles from the economic immigration came here as the result of political and economic situations which left them handicapped in every way. They came here as beggars, looking for jobs and decent conditions of life. What is more, they had no one to stand by their side — they did not have the support of their native land and were treated as Austrians, Russians or Prussians, and sometimes as fugitives. Their economic and political situation was handicapped from the beginning. Various things have been said about how handicapped the Polish Catholics abroad are, and how underprivileged the Polish American Church is. We know that this situation was based on the state of the Church in Poland. I do not stop asking myself the question why it was only the Irish or German immigrants who wanted to control the Church in this country. Was the control exercised by these groups a result of discrimination, or were there other reasons for it. I think that at the bottom of it all, we find a collision between the Anglo-Saxon and Slavic spirits. Even the German immigrants were closer to the original groups which dominated the United States in its developing stages in a political, economic and cultural sense. The Polish or Slavic immigrant, arriving here with political and economic handicaps, had little hope of winning in such a competition in the new society. Therefore, I am not quite

certain if we shouldn't condition our analyses by certain relative factors. By certain relative factors, I mean that we should not stop at considering simply how much we have acquired, but rather how much we have achieved in view of the underprivileged state in which Polonia originally found itself. This is my first reaction in response to what has been said.

The second element which I think should be considered here is the change which occurred in the profile of the Polish immigration, and also the change in the last generation of Polonia. It is immediately apparent that the new, post-war immigration is essentially an immigration of intelligentsia. It is even more striking in Canada, a factor which highlights the difference between Polonia in Canada and the United States. But we must add that the Canadian Polonia still does not have a Polish bishop, which our Canadian compatriots reiterate with some bitterness. Time and again, I wonder why the Canadian Polonia, which has so many marvelous professors and specialists in diverse areas who enjoy the well-deserved respect of Canadian society, does not have its own bishop. It isn't enough to merely state that there isn't one, nor to blame everyone for this; we have to ask why. This kind of analysis is necessary in order to act in the future.

I think that American Polonia, and to a slightly different sense Canadian Polonia, have many possibilities for very effective action and for achieving a much firmer grounding in the American society. In the face of the losses that Polonia has had to suffer, particularly of a moral nature, I think that the process of conforming to the American society has meant a loss of identity in the third and fourth generation and that this is a negative phenomenon from the ethical standpoint. This does not mean that any person who went through such a transformation is in any way personally responsible, but there is a negative moral element here. I still cannot forget the analysis conducted by a priest during a session which arrived at similar conclusions, though based on religious grounds. This priest, an American of Polish heritage and doctor of sociology, analyzed the route which led him to believe that he was an American and not a Pole. Though an American, he could not identify with the WASP, nor with the Irish, but was instead an Ameri-

*NOTE—This is a translated and edited transcript of a speech originally given extemporaneously in Polish.

can of Polish ancestry. He said that he could not change without betraying himself. Without betraying himself! Here is the crux of the whole matter. The process of external assimilation, this conformist process which Polonia underwent, is in a sense morally negative since it may signify the negation of oneself which man should not allow to happen. So many of today's youths can be observed in a search for their own past, like the Polish priest from the fourth generation that I mentioned. The search for one's identity when based on one's national history is a positive phenomenon. It is a morally positive phenomenon which should be encouraged, and in a sense, liberated. I do not think it is a mass occurrence, nor can it be conducted on a mass scale. Were I to compare it to the sphere of spiritual guidance, it would have to be a very personal guidance since it is a question of awakening one's awareness and conscience and bringing to life one's personal responsibility.

What I have just said is to supplement what has already been said. I would also like to mention here the matter of cooperation because what I have said thus far concerns your actions in particular. After all, I cannot say too much, since here I am a guest and an outsider. What you have dealt with have been past actions and how you wish and must act for the common cause of Polonia's authenticity and identity. However, from my point of view, the crucial issue is cooperation. Both this conference and the one at Orchard Lake aim at this problem. What you have been telling me is this: "All seventeen of you came here from Poland, and what do you want to do, what should you do, what can you do, what do you have the right to do, in order for the Church to continue its role towards Polonia not only in the religious sense, but in its fuller traditional sense." This question is a source of constant reflection and I will not make a secret of the fact that it was the reason for our visit. At the same time we realize that we could not have arrived here in this fashion, say, fifty or sixty or eighty years ago.

Just try to think of the problems of the Polish Church in the period of the Partitions, and of how small were the possibilities of the church hierarchy under Prussian rule where the bishops were not immune from arrest. Under Russian rule, as shown in the example of Cardinal Ledo-

chowski, the Church was not sufficiently represented in the cities and the bishops were constantly persecuted by the Czarist government. Even under the Austrians, matters were bad until the end of the nineteenth century when they got a little better. To give just one example, the Cracow diocese did not have a bishop for nearly half a century following the banning of Bishop Skorkowski for his sympathizing with the revolutionaries of the November Uprising that took place mostly in the neighboring Russian territories. Following his exile, the capital did not have a bishop until 1879, and instead there were only administering priests. These problems had the effect that even in places where there were grounds for good Church relations, the possibilities of the Polish Episcopate taking up the responsibility for the Polish immigration to America were in fact very limited. Between the wars, Poland made the first steps in this direction, but afterwards as you all know, Poland had to make up for its own insufficiencies in various areas of its own territory. Aside from this, we had a rather difficult internal situation. Hence there is a reason for the fact that the Polish Episcopate had insufficient connections with Polonia. I do not want to absolve the Episcopate of all responsibilities. I only want to present the realities of various periods.

It is also significant that we could come here to visit only thirty years after the war. We all know that the Primate had plans to come here on the occasion of our Millennium, and could not finally come. I myself was here for the first time in 1969 as I mentioned previously, and it was, in the words of Father Peszkowski, only "a slight touching of America." This is the first visit we had a real chance to prepare for, to study the problems presented by Polonia.

How do we see our possibilities for acting in the future? We realize that the mere emotional effect of our visit is not very substantial, even though it does represent something. It is the confirmation of the real existence of Poland, of the existence of the Church in Poland, and of the existence of Catholic Poland, no doubt. It is also quite possible that our presence here will be interpreted quite differently, and we took this possibility into consideration. But we arrived at the conclusion that the very confirmation of Poland's existence and that of the Church in Poland, and



Cardinal Wojtyla speaking with Josef Glowacki, President of the PNA of Brooklyn, NY (extreme right). To the right of the Cardinal is Msgr. A. Rojek, pastor of St. Stanislaus Church on Staten Island, who was instrumental in arranging the Cardinal's visit.



Dr. Jan Fryling and Dr. Wacław Jedrzejewicz of the Pilsudski Institute of New York talk over matters of mutual interest with the Cardinal.



Two guests at the Cardinal's reception, Mr. J. Płakowski (l.) and Mr. W. Wasiutynski (r.), discuss the evening's talks with Dr. Eugene Kusielowicz.



Among the guests were several of the officers and their wives from the Polish American Club of North Jersey, (left to right): Mrs. George Sharbo, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Murzyn, Mrs. Mary D. Van Starrex, assistant to the president of the KF, and Mr. George Sharbo.



Service at the reception was kindly provided by members of the Polish American Folk Dance Company (from l. to r.) Jill Nadolny, Diana Wrobel, Christine Shepetuk and Connie Mendala.

particularly of the existence of the Episcopate is of such great value that we had to undertake the trip. Though this had value in itself, we realized that following this trip some steps have to be made in the direction of the American Church hierarchy. The ground for such steps are not provided so much by our jurisdictional powers on American soil, as by the principles of the Collegiate Church, and more particularly by the norms regulating the affairs of the so-called Immigration Pastorate in the entire world-wide Church.

These norms are contained particularly in the documents of the Apostolic See, such as *Exul familia* and a more recent one, *Pastoralism migratorum cura*. These, particularly the second, state that the right and obligation of pastoral concern for immigrants have two sides: the Episcopate of the country into which they have arrived, and the Episcopate of the country from which they left. Of course, a problem arises from this, namely to which generation shall the two Episcopates share their responsibilities. According to the viewpoint of some bishops, it is with the second generation, which is in the case of the United States is already fluent in the native language and aware of the services of the pastorate in the new country, that the people fall out of the domain of the Episcopate of their forefathers. This is a controversial view, but in a sense, our experience confirms it. If the second or third generation of Polish immigrants do not speak Polish anymore, then a pastorate in the Polish language is rather artificial to them. Following our experiences with American Polonia, we think that any sort of immediate pastoral care for the next generations of Poles is not immediately necessary, especially for a generation unfamiliar with the language. In another sense though, a Polish pastorate is needed since it is well known that one does not merely belong to a nation on the basis of the spoken language. Possibly the most important element is national identity, since the feeling of cultural belonging is much more profound than a familiarity with the language. We can be easily convinced of this by our meetings with representatives of the second or third generation who speak Polish poorly or not at all, yet in whom it is still easy to trace the cultural heritage of Poland.

But I do not think that we can dismiss the language issue so easily; it

cannot be dismissed by any group of Polish immigrants. It is true enough that a knowledge of the language of the country in which one resides is fundamental for any sort of advance within the society, but we have to reinforce bilingual education at any cost. Knowledge of this country's language, yes, but familiarity with the language of our forefather's too. In this respect I am not sure if Polonia is not guilty of a few sins. Perhaps there are certain aspects of it which could be made up, though I do agree with the previous speakers that it would be very difficult. Instead, perhaps we should guard ourselves against the danger of falling out of the bilingual pattern even further, since we know how important language is to the sense of national identity.

Returning to my original point about cooperation: of course we want to undertake cooperation and certain steps have already been taken even if they are only first steps. What is now called the Pastorate of Polish Immigrants, at whose head is the Primate, but in fact Bishop Rubin, is situated in the worst possible circumstances. Here again, the obstacles of the past pose obstacles in the present. The previous speakers mentioned that the Polish parishes are dying out. They offered tremendous services to the pastorate and to the Polish cause in their day. Today, they often decay, and even though they are nominally Polish parishes, they become in fact, American or English parishes. Well, the fact that there exists a network of nominally Polish parishes gives the American church hierarchy the argument that there still exists a marvelously organized Polish pastorate here. But this is not the case, because national parishes in general and Polish ones in particular have ceased springing up and there exists other problems as well.

As I traveled about the US, I had a chance to examine other matters. The Italians and Mexicans who talked to me about similar matters spoke in even sharper tones about their need for national parishes. So the problem is very complex, and the Polish parishes which once fulfilled their role are not fulfilling it any more and have not managed to absorb the new immigration. We lack the sort of pastoral structure to serve such a purpose. These structures are possible, and I saw the example of one such organization which is a particular

source of pride for Bishop Rubin. The Polish Mission in San Francisco is the first pastoral structure of this type in the US, and as far as I know, the only one. We will have to move more in this direction because the character of the new immigration today is quite different than in the past.

We shall try to mention all these issues during our discussions with the American Episcopate, and will attempt to make them the center of our discussions. We have already begun to do so. The visit of Bishop Bernardi to Poland in the Spring of this year was not without significance. He had served as the president of a conference on the United Nations, and we have already had a chance to take up these matters with him. Our visit here will be productive in this respect. But as I say, these are only first steps. We all feel, particularly Bishop Rubin, who is most responsible for these affairs, that some decisive steps must be taken within the Polish American pastorate to fulfill the needs of all of the generations of Polonia.

This may be sufficient to answer the questions raised today. I am not sure if I replied to them in great enough detail, but then I'm not sure that I can answer them any fuller as I am only a visitor here, a guest in transit.

To end my talk here, I would like to make note of remarks of a previous speaker who mentioned the great number of guests here today in the audience are from the Cracow diocese. Many went to school there, or were born in the area, and one of our first speakers mentioned that he was of goral heritage. As I myself represent Cracow, I would very much like to thank all of you for the warm attention paid to the capital of the Piasts and Jagiellonians and extend our greetings.

If the American Polonia expect us to cooperate in matters pertaining to the Polish American community, then we would expect Polonia to cooperate in taking the great responsibility of the Polish nation for Christianity. We have to put it this way because we are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of the American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel. This confrontation

lies within the plans of Divine Providence; it is a trial which the whole Church, and the Polish Church in particular, must take up. We all realize it is not an easy matter, and a great deal of it depends upon the outcome on the Vistula. I think that Polonia is perhaps the most aware of it, and it seems to me that other layers of American society are less enlightened in this respect and simply eliminate this problem from their sphere of interests. Polonia, which shares Poland's sentiments, feels the significance of the confrontation going on at the banks of the Vistula. It is a trial of not only our nation and Church, but in a sense a test of two thousand years culture and Christian civilization with all of its consequences for human dignity, individual rights, human rights and the rights of nations. All these are affected by the confrontation. As the number of people who understand the importance of this confrontation increase in Poland and America, we can look with greater trust towards the outcome of this confrontation. The Church has gone through many trials, as has the Polish nation, and has emerged victorious even though at a cost of great sacrifice.

If I were to raise more personal matters here at the Kosciuszko Foundation, I would very much like to bring the situation of the old and distinguished Theology Department of the Jagiellonian University to the attention of the scholars and scientists present here. This venerable department was removed from the University in 1954 and now exists as a papal Theology Department in Cracow. It has many reasons for its activity, for the number of theology students in Cracow is great. In spite of the fact that it services perhaps the largest circle of students in Cracow, or perhaps in all of Poland, it is considered nonexistent and treated without respect. I think that it could benefit from the support of Polish American Catholics. It is difficult for me to talk about details, as we haven't the time.

Thank you very much for this meeting which turned out to be a great source of information about Polonia's troubles. It is obvious that there are not only Poles still living in the world of Paris of the 19th Century, but Poles of the world of 20th Century New York. This has been another chance to learn of your concerns and to conduct a sort of spiritual mobilization necessary for con-

crete action.

It was Wyspianski who said that "Poles could have more if they would only will to want it." Maybe we have changed enough so that Poles will want more; if only they want more, they will be able to have more.

Closing Address by Prof. Eugene Kusielewicz

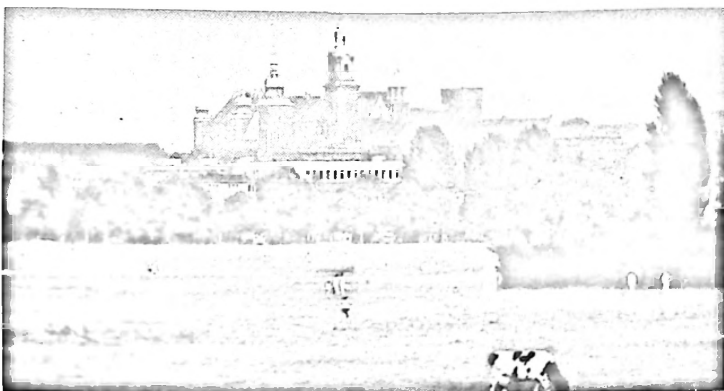
Your Eminence, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Eminence for taking of his time to meet with and to exchange views with our Polonia. The present visit of the delegation of Polish Bishops, headed by His Emi-

nence will have a tremendous impact on the future of the Polish American Community. It has already done much in drawing the attention of the American hierarchy to the existence of the Polish community within the Catholic Church. Hopefully, it will draw attention to the many injustices which large segments of the Polish American community feel they suffer with in the Catholic Church in the United States. This visit has also made the Polish American community more aware of the problems the Church in Poland faces. Hopefully it will result in closer cooperation between Poles both here in the United States and Poland. Hopefully, too, we will not have to wait for another Eucharistic Congress to convene in America for another such visit to take place.

Summertime Impressions of Poland

Photos of the 1976 Summer Session Students



A view of the Wawel Castle in Cracow, by John Kozuch.



An old woman outside her house in Jaslo, by Julianne Rice.