

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/digital-resources/articles/7826,Poland-know-how-to-be-grateful-Saint-John-Paul-II-about-his-Fatherland.html>

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## Poland, know how to be grateful! Saint John Paul II about his Fatherland

When John Paul II, on August 19th 2002, left his country, he said: My beloved Fatherland, Poland, [...] God exalts you and marks you as special, but know how to be grateful! The pope stressed once more, how important patriotism was for him.



Every time he came to his Fatherland, he showed his great love for it. He also addressed a patriotic message to Poles – which still hold its value today. Until the very end he thought and wrote in Polish. His last words: “Let me go to the Father’s home!” he also said in his native language.

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## One should not create the illusion of freedom

John Paul II talked about Poland almost everywhere, on the occasion of various speeches, meetings, addresses.

He did so even during the Sunday contemplations after the Angelus prayer, which the world saw i.e. on December 13<sup>th</sup> 1981, when the dictatorship of Wojciech Jaruzelski introduced martial law in Poland and the pope appealed,

Polish blood must not be spilled, because too much of it has been spilled already, especially during the last war. We need to do everything we can to build the future of our Fatherland in peace.

Five days later, on December 18<sup>th</sup>, he wrote a letter to gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski demanding the bloodshed to stop:

The events of the recent days, the news of killed and wounded Poles in relation to the martial law introduced on December 13<sup>th</sup>, force me to address you, Mr General with a strong request and sincere appeal to stop the actions which bring the shedding of Polish blood.

The pope also reminded that in the past two hundred years Poles were met with countless wrongs and a lot of Polish blood was spilled, hence he wrote:

In this perspective of history, the Polish blood must be spilled no more; this blood can no longer burden the consciences and stain the hands of our Countrymen. I address you, General, with a strong request and demand to bring back the matters of improving the society, which had been led with peaceful dialogue since August 1980, to the same road. [...] The basic, human desire for peace is what speaks for discontinuing the martial law in Poland. The church is the advocate of this desire. [...] I appeal to your conscience, General, to the consciences of all the people who are now making decisions.

The pope spoke *about Poles and for Poles*. And when in 1983 he came to Poland which was still under the martial law, he came as a comforter, someone, who wanted to bring back hope and show unity with those who were suffering in any way.

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