

Institute of National Remembrance

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John Paul II: basic facts, part 2

"LET YOUR SPIRIT COME DOWN AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE LAND. THIS LAND!"

Pastoral visits of John Paul II to Poland

10-12 June 1979

"Let your Spirit come down and renew the face of the land. This land!"

- The first visit of John Paul II to his homeland
- A visit to Warsaw, Gniezno, Częstochowa, Cracow, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Wadowice, Oświęcim, Nowy Targ, and again to Cracow

16-23 June 1983

"Peace be with you, Poland, my homeland"

- The most difficult pilgrimage to his homeland - due to the Martial Law introduced in Poland, and the delegatization of "Solidarity"
- The visit was highly-anticipated by the society and church hierarchs

8-14 June 1987

"He loved them till the end"

- A visit to the grave of murdered Father Jerzy Popiełuszko and Gdańsk, the cradle of "Solidarity", and the famous words, "There is no liberty without 'Solidarity'".

1-9 June 1991, 13-20 August 1991

"Thank God and do not quench the Holy Spirit"

- The first pilgrimage to independent Poland
- The 1991 World Youth Day

22 May 1995

- The visit was less official and its main destination was the Czech Republic

31 May - 10 June 1997

"Jesus Christ: Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow"

- In the context of this pilgrimage, the Pope attended the ceremonies of the 1,000th anniversary of the death of St. Wojciech.

5-17 June 1999

"God is Love"

- The longest pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II to Poland

16-19 August 2002

"God, rich in mercy"

- The last pilgrimage to Poland



The fight against Communism

"When Poland becomes Christian inside out, it will be a great moral power, and Communism will fall all by itself. Its fate will be decided not in Russia, but in Poland," said Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.

Karol Wojtyła as a clergyman experienced the communist regime up close, and that is why he began to fight this totalitarian ideology as a Pope. He appealed to human conscience and searched for allies - one of them was President Ronald Reagan. Their joint action and "Solidarity" in Poland contributed to the fall of Communism.



The Father of "Solidarity"

"There would be no 'Solidarity' without John Paul II. The idea of 'Solidarity' was the centre of his interest. The 1980 strikes and what happened later, establishing the 'Solidarity' Trade Union, was very close to his heart," said Leszek Biernacki.

The revolution of "Solidarity" broke out several months after the first pilgrimage of John Paul II to Poland. This visit gave the Poles hope and contributed to the creation of the 10-million "Solidarity" movement. The Pope became its patron and promoter.

Attempted Assassination

"One hand pulled the trigger, another guided the bullet," said John Paul II.

At at 5:19 p.m. on 13 May 1981 at St Peter's Square in Rome, John Paul II got shot by a Turkish assassin, Mehmet Ali Ağca. The Pope was wounded in the abdomen and arm. The IPN's prosecutors point out that Bulgarian intelligence was involved with the attempted assassination, and Ağca was a mere instrument. The Holy Father forgave him.



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Prepared by Artur Chomicz
Review: dr Daniel Guoniewicz
Language correction: dr Roksana Blech
Design: Piotr Wlajek
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