

Polish Students In Czestochowa

On 18th May, more than 8000 students gathered in Czestochowa at Our Lady's shrine to renew the Czestochowa vows of the Polish Nation before the Millenium of Christianity in Poland.

The intricacy and complexity of moral problems of youth were the chief subject of reflection in Czestochowa. Indeed in his welcome address, the Father of the Pauline Order in Czestochowa expressed his uncertainty "whether the young guests of the Holy Mother are Her delight or Her sorrow."

In his letter to the students, His Eminence Cardinal Wyszynski said: "To stand the test of the present, difficult situation, our youth must first of all be wise. It is for the gift of wisdom that you should ask Our Lady today. Students should be wise to choose, among various programs of life, the program of the Gospel which is expressed in Czestochowa vows. This program best answers the needs of human nature. It also fulfills the present needs of our nation...The Polish students should be strong and unbending to be able to carry out the chosen program and to overcome all possible handicaps, weaknesses and addictions."

On behalf of the students, Mr. A. Stanowski from the Catholic University of Lublin spoke of a kind of aversion for big words and ideological programs, which resulted from numerous abuses and incongruities between theory and practice. He pointed out that such dislike is perhaps comprehensible but should be reasonably controlled all the same. Young people should learn to appreciate the value of generalized programs and to form a fair judgement of the actual compliance of words and deeds in each single case, without preconceived assumptions.

The crisis of ideologies, he continued, has still another source, namely the ardent desire for independence, for "seeking one's own way". Young people want to be intellectually independent in spite of the obvious limitations of their personal experience and in spite of serious shortcomings in making use of the "precise art of thinking".

The lack of faith is another source of indifference. Ideologies engage us to improve the world about us, but it cannot be done without belief in the possibility of improving things, without conviction that it depends upon ourselves to change our surroundings. We have lost the sense of responsibility.

Mr. Stanowski criticized this attitude and pointed out that something good can be done in any circumstances. "Each epoch calls for something to be done; it is for us to find the key - to guess what it is".

Passing to practical goals, Mr. Stanowski emphasized the need of improving the knowledge of our religion. "We sometimes doubt whether Christ's Truth provides answers to contemporary questions. But do we actually know Christ's Truth? A most confusing disproportion is to be observed between the level of professional knowledge and the level of religious knowledge".



Another goal is the development of social responsibility, in the sense of a conscious and scrupulous professional work.

Last but not least, there is the question of the daily attitude towards others, the question of helping people.

"We should never try to divide people into two groups: the 'good ones', - those who help others and the 'bad ones' - those who do not. This world of ours is arranged in such a strange way, - and it seems to be a beautiful arrangement - that we all need help and we all can help in something".

After the pilgrimage, the participants were invited to lunch by the Pauline Fathers and in the afternoon the students' theatre and choir gave performances in the Pilgrims' Hall.

Note: This account of the pilgrimage has been taken in summarized ^{form} from the "Tygodnik Powszechny" of June 1, 1958

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