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The *Honoris Causa* Doctorate awarded by the Jagiellonian University to Pope John Paul II¹

The circumstances of awarding an *honoris causa* doctorate to John Paul II by the Jagiellonian University, in 1983, have at the same time their dramatic and symbolic dimension. It has to be remembered that after the Second World War, the official relations between *Alma Mater Jagellonica* and Cracow Metropolitan Archdiocese died for many years. Even though the Faculty of Theology operated at the Jagiellonian University until 1954, there were practically no relations between the university authorities and the diocesan curia. And it was the curia that was at fault. Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha was fighting for a place of the Church in the life of nation, was sending protest letters to Bolesław Bierut, the President of Poland, defending Catholic school system and the Polish branch of *Caritas Internationalis*, and advocating in favour of the Catholic press. However, he could not do much against the powerful machine being built by the activists of the Polish Workers' Party and later on – the Polish United Workers' Party. Likewise, in the first post-war years, his contacts with the Jagiellonian University authorities were reduced to the absolute minimum.

These relations were practically broken after the death of Cardinal Sapieha on 23 July 1951 when the helm of the Cracow Archdiocese was taken by the vicar-general – Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak, being on compulsory exile in Poland after expulsion from his Lvov Archdiocese. Interned in December 1952 and then

¹ The full text included in: F. Ziejka, *Jan Paweł II I polski świat akademicki*, Kraków 2014, pp. 93-130

arrested, he was admittedly released in 1953 for medical reasons but expelled out of the Cracow Archdiocese. In such a situation, he had practically no chances to maintain any contacts with the Jagiellonian University authorities. With the decision of the Council of Ministers of August 1954, the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University was officially moved to Warsaw Theological Academy that was coming into existence, but in fact was liquidated.

On 13 January 1964 the metropolitan bishopric see in Cracow was taken by Karol Wojtyła, who was until then (since 1958) its auxiliary bishop. And as early as that year, an unpleasant dissonance took place between the Jagiellonian University authorities and the new metropolitan bishop. In May that year, the University was celebrating the jubilee of 600 years of its existence. Regrettably, the university authorities “forgot” to invite the new Cracow ordinary – Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, its former student, doctorand the last habilitated docent in theology.²

While holding his office of the metropolitan bishop, Archbishop Wojtyła visited the Jagiellonian University twice: He was here the first time in 1967 when showing *Collegium Maius* to Cardinal Agostino Casaroli. This purely private visit was not noticed by the university authorities but was recorded by the Security Service³. For the second time, Archbishop Wojtyła appeared at the university on the fervent days of March 1968, when after removing the performance of a Romantic play *Dziady* (*Forefathers’ Eve*) by Adam Mickiewicz, directed by Kazimierz Dejmek, from the repertoire of the National Theatre in Warsaw, students along with writers and artists started to protest country-wide, also in Cracow, against omnipotent censorship.⁴The stage of the protests, apart from Warsaw, was also Cracow.⁵ By coincidence, on those fervent days of March, demonstrations and rallies organized by students, the Jagiellonian

² In connection with the jubilee of the Jagiellonian University, in September 1964 Archbishop Karol Wojtyła organized a religious celebration in Wawel Cathedral and the University Collegiate Church of St. Anne, as well as a commemorative scientific session. More about it in: F. Ziejka, *Jan Paweł II i polski świat akademicki*, Kraków 2014, pp. 354–365.

³ Cf. M. Lasota, *Donos na Wojtyłę. Karol Wojtyła w teczkach bezpieki*, Kraków 2006.

⁴ Cf. L.K. Perzanowski, A. Kuczmiarczyk, *Nie ma chleba bez wolności. Reportaż dokumentalny z wydarzeń marcowych w Polsce*, Londyn 1971; J. Eisler, *Marzec 1968. Geneza, przebieg, konsekwencje*, Warszawa 1991; M. Fik, *Marcowa kultura. Wokół „Dziadów”*. *Literaci i władza, kampania marcowa*, Warszawa 1995; J. Brochocki, *Rewolta marcowa. Narodziny, życie i śmierć PRL*, Warszawa 2001.

⁵ Cf. J. Kwiek, *Marzec 1968 w Krakowie*, Kraków 2008.



fot. Konrad K. Pollesch

University planned a scientific session to commemorate 50 years of scientific work of Professor Adam Vetulani, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's friend. The session took place on 2 March. Invited by the jubilarian, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła arrived at *Collegium Novum* lecture hall. That visit most likely surprised the university authorities, but first of all, it astonished the political authorities of the city and the region. And it is hard to prove it was a pure coincidence that on the following day, the students and professors of the university who were trying to find a hiding place in *Collegium Novum* were attacked by the militia forces.⁶

⁶ Both these events – Archbishop Wojtyła's visit to the Jagiellonian University, and the intrusion of police and riot police squads into *Collegium Novum* – were considered together by Rector Józef Gierowski in his article: *Starania o wizytę Ojca św. Na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim*, in: *Servoveritatis II*, red. A. Pelczar i W. Stróżewski, Kraków 1996. Cf. also:

Ten years later, on 16 October 1978, when the news about the election of Karol Wojtyła as pope arrived in Cracow, only a single congratulation telegram was sent to the Vatican from the Jagiellonian University, drafted by Professor Tadeusz Ulewicz on behalf of the university professors.⁷ Likewise, the first pilgrimage of the Holy Father to his homeland in 1979, went mostly unheard at the university. The university authorities, following the guidelines from the voivodship committee of the Polish Workers' United Party, issued a ban on decorating the university buildings on occasion of John Paul II's visit. They also deprived the faculty members and students their right to organize a visit with the Dignified Guest. Despite this, a group of educators and students met the Holy Father on 8 June.

Following the surge of ever new initiatives and demands put forward at the university, as early as in September 1980, an idea of commemorating John Paul II with a special plaque at the university emerged.⁸ Admittedly, this demand was not satisfied but on the wave of enthusiasm, in the milieu of professors of different faculties a request was made to grant the Holy Father an honorary doctorate by the Jagiellonian University. In view of repetitive insistence from everywhere, Mieczysław Hess, the university rector, started talks with Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, the Cracow metropolitan bishop. When they were completed, at the sitting of the university senate on 8 April 1981, Mr Hess informed the gathered faculty members that for protocol reasons there was no opportunity to confer this distinction to the Holy Father. However, at the same sitting, he suggested that instead of making efforts to grant the Pope a honorary doctorate, the university would prepare and hand over to John Paul II a special *Address*, in which they could, in a dignified manner, highlight the permanent bonds of the Jagiellonian University with the Polish Pope.

It turned out that a special committee, consisting of Professor Franciszek Sławski and Professor Mieczysław Mroczkowski from the Faculty of Philology,

B. Sławiński, *Kulisy nadania doktoratu honoris causa UJ Janowi Pawłowi II*, in: "Alma Mater" 104-105 (2008), pp. 78-83.

⁷ Such information is given by Wojciech M. Bartel in the volume *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński w latach 1978–1983. Wybór dokumentów*, oprac. W.M. Bartel, Kraków 1994. The text of the telegram: *Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II - Segreteria di Stato - Città del Vaticano. Suo Doctor, Colleague et Pastori optima ex immopectore vots nec non fidelitatem edicunt. Universitas Jagellonicae Cracoviensis Professores* (p. 11).

⁸ This was a demand voiced on 30 September 1980 by the newly elected committee of "Solidarity" trade union in the Institute of Zoology and Environmental Biology of the Jagiellonian University (cf. „Solidarność” *Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 1980–1989. Wybory dokumentów*, oprac. T. Gąsowski i A. Roliński, Kraków 2010, p. 300).

and Professor Wojciech M. Bartel, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, had been already established to prepare *the Address*. The committee made the first draft of *the Address* whose content was read at the same sitting by Professor Franciszek Sławski, the eldest member of the Senate.⁹

Officially *the Address* made reference to the second anniversary of John Paul II's pilgrimage to his homeland. Its authors strongly emphasized that "the Community of the Jagiellonian University has a more particular reason to be proud. It prides itself on the fact that Your Holiness was a student of *Jagiellonicae Matris* in the Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of Theology, a doctor of divinity and a habilitated docent of our University. In subsequent parts of the document the authors stated, among others: We feel, Your Holiness, that you are a distinguished supporter of social order and justice among nations – the ideas proclaimed by our rectors: Stanisław of Skarbimierz and Paweł Włodkowic. You are at the same time, Your Holiness, a proven defender of the rights of human personality whose expertise you deepened, especially under the influence of Fr Konstany Michalski, the pride of our university and a reputable academic scholar. "Recalling the names of Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha and Professor Stanisław Pigoń in further parts of *the Address* and informing the Pope about steps taken to organize an international session dedicated to the issues close to the Pope's heart, they concluded by assuring, in the name of the whole university community, about their deep respect and hope that "in future, Your Holiness will continue to provide your kindness and support to the Jagiellonian University."¹⁰ Approved univocally by the university senate, *the Address* was decided to be delivered to the Pope in two language versions: Polish and Latin.

In accordance with quite a comprehensive report prepared by Professor Wojciech M. Bartel for the university senate, the delegation of the Jagiellonian University was received by the Holy Father on 11 May 1981 in the Pope's private library. Professor Sławski read out the Polish version of *the Address* and Professor Bartel – its Latin text.¹¹

⁹ Amendments were made to the text of *the Address*. As proved by a draft copy of the text, kept in the Jagiellonian University archives, amendments were made *inter alia* by Professor Henryk Markiewicz. In the course of the said sitting of the Senate, an opportunity of publishing Karol Wojtyła's works by the Jagiellonian University in its scientific journals (*Zeszyty Naukowe*) was contemplated. However, this initiative was not undertaken or launched.

¹⁰ *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński ...*, pp. 13–14.

¹¹ John Paul II donated to the Jagiellonian University: facsimile of Letters of St. Peter and facsimile of the illuminated codex, the so-called *Gelasian Sacramentary* covered in wooden

Two days after John Paul II's receipt of the delegation of the Jagiellonian University, his attempted assassination took place. Responding to that news, Professor Franciszek Sławski, the chairman of the delegation, sent a telegram to Vatican.¹²

Following the wave of intensive flurry caused by the attempted assassination of the Pope by the Turkish assassin, an initiative of *the White March* was launched in Cracow. Its participants were to highlight their bonds with critically wounded John Paul II and, at the same time, to protest against terrorism. The initiative of organizing *the March* was undertaken by the Cracow academic milieu. However, it was immediately supported by other citizens of Cracow. "The White March Resolution was announced, which, among others, stated: On 17 May 1981 from Cracow *Błonia* Park, the place where the Holy Father spoke to us, "*The White March*" will start. Why white? The white colour is our cry, our protest against the wave of darkness flooding the world."¹³

Indeed, on Sunday 17 May 1981 from the early morning, a multi-thousand crowd of Cracow students and other Cracovians was gathering at *Błonia* Park. Within two hours, a crowd of about 300,000 participants of *the White March* followed the route from *Błonia* Park to the Main Square to a field altar placed in front of Saint Mary's Church. The organizers of *the March* set up order-keeping forces, wearing white and red armbands, consisting of 400 students and 300 foundry workers from Nowa Huta. It is appropriate to recall here a part of the coverage of that event by a correspondent of *Dziennik Polski* daily: "At 11 a.m. the march started coming onto the slab of the Main Square from Szewska Street: white flags, papal white and yellow banners, the flags of the AGH University of Science and Technology, the Cracow University of Technology, a white eagle on a red background, flowers in hands. The march proceeded in silence and concentration. And so, until 12 a.m., all generations of Cracovians poured into the Main Square. A few minutes before twelve Anna Polony and Jerzy Radziwiłłowicz, actors, recited Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer's poem *Na Anioł Pański* (*For the Angelus Prayer*). At 12 a.m. sharp a Holy Mass started for John Paul II and the seriously ill Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the

planks and placed in an ornamented leather box. It should be added that during its stay in Rome, the delegation of the Jagiellonian University paid visit to the Polish embassy, and the day preceding its visit to Vatican it paid tribute to Polish soldiers buried at the Polish war cemetery at Monte Cassino.

¹² *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński...*, p. 26.

¹³ "Dziennik Polski" 98 (1981), the issue of 18 May.

Primate of Poland, celebrated by Cardinal Franciszek Macharski. The choir of the Cracow Academy of Music sang: 'Cracow, you are great. Poland, you are great with your weaknesses and with your quests.' "God bless you for that greatness. God bless you, young people. God bless you, foundry workers, for your blood offered to the Holy Father. We are close to you, the Holy Father and you, Father Primate." That sermon delivered by Cardinal Franciszek Macharski was heard by thousands of Cracovians gathered on Sunday on the Main Square.¹⁴

There are strong indications that one of the outcomes of *the White March* was an idea to organize in Cracow a big international scientific session dedicated to John Paul II. Finally, its date was postponed to autumn 1984. It was held in the lecture hall of *Collegium Novum* on 16–17 November 1984.¹⁵

In mid-1981 there were the first, after World War II, free elections of rectors and deans at the universities in Cracow and other academic cities. Regrettably, soon after, the martial law was introduced across the country. In spite of the victimisation suffered, the academic community did not get disconcerted. Almost immediately, the underground structures of "Solidarity" trade union started to operate, which from the beginning kept in touch with university authorities.¹⁶

The person of John Paul II was, in that case, a *sui generis* bedrock that was to maintain the majority's faith in a better future. There were many proofs of that. One of them was the initiative of Professor Ryszard Łużny, the Dean of the Faculty of Philology at the Jagiellonian University, who as early as in January 1982, i.e. a month after the introduction of martial law in Poland, at the meeting

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Despite sending invitations for participation in the session to more than twenty scholars from the Jagiellonian University, the Pontifical Academy of Theology, the Catholic University of Lublin, Warsaw Theological Academy, Christian Theological Academy, the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław and University of Rome, merely ten speakers attended it: Carlo Caffara (Rome), Kurt Krenn (Regensburg), John Crossy (Dallas), Stanisław Grygiel (Rome), Józef Majka (Wrocław) and five professors of the Jagiellonian University: Tadeusz Ulewicz, Andrzej Fuliński, Ewa Miodońska-Brookes, Maria Bobrownicka and Wojciech M. Bartel.

¹⁶ Cf. „Solidarność” *Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*.... A permanent representative of the underground "Solidarity" trade union for contacts with the university rectors was Professor Kazimierz Godłowski, an archaeologist. A lot of important comments to the events happening at the university at that time can be found in the recently published book: Ewa Miodońska-Brookes, *Tutaj, czyli w Krakowie. Rozmowy o domu i Uniwersytecie*, red. J. Zach, D. Jarząbek-Wasył, M. Antoniuk, Kraków 2013.

of his own Faculty Board submitted a petition to get the Jagiellonian University to nominate John Paul II to the Nobel Peace Prize.

Meanwhile, in mid-1982 news about the planned second pilgrimage of John Paul II to his homeland broke. The news came in soon after John Paul II's visit to Portugal along with the information that the Pope had received an honorary doctorate from the University of Coimbra. Therefore, it was decided to do everything so that during his expected stay in Cracow, the Pope would visit the Jagiellonian University and the university would award an honorary doctorate to its Famous Alumnus and Academic.

The negotiations on it, as Józef A. Gierowski writes, were first held during a "Christmas Eve" meeting between Mr Gierowski, the Rector and Andrzej Kopff, the Deputy Rector, with Cardinal Franciszek Macharski in December 1982. It was when Cardinal Macharski was to draw up an action plan that it became successful. The plan envisaged that it was Vatican who would submit to the authorities of the Polish People's Republic the Pope's request to visit the Jagiellonian University, and having been informed about the Holy Father's intention, the university authorities would offer the Honourable Guest *anhonoris causa* doctorate.¹⁷ The adopted strategy worked, even though numerous obstacles occurred on the way.

In the first weeks of 1983, the Holy See did come up with a request for John Paul II's visit to the Jagiellonian University. The authorities of the Polish People's Republic could not disregard the Pope's wish. The university rector - in accordance with the previously adopted action plan - offered an honorary doctorate to the Pope. This offer was instantly objected by Professor Benon Miśkiewicz, the then Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology. Finally Minister Miśkiewicz gave up. However, unexpectedly, stumbling blocks occurred locally: Józef Gajewicz, the then First Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party strongly objected to conferring *anhonoris causa* doctorate to John Paul II. He gave up only after a longer bargaining.¹⁸

¹⁷ Gierowski wrote: *At the initiative of Cardinal [Franciszek Macharski] we agreed that the proposed visit [of John Paul II] would be presented by the Vatican to the authorities of the Polish People's Republic who, in such situation, could not reject it, what might happen if it were the university that made a request. The university was to respond to the request for such visit with its honorary doctorate.* (J.A. Gierowski, *Starania o wizytę Ojca św. Na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim...*, p. 264).

¹⁸ J.A. Gierowski, *Starania o wizytę Ojca św. na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim...*, p. 265.

It was agreed that it would be an honorary doctorate awarded to the Holy Father by all six existing university faculties. Between 12th and 21st April 1983 all Faculty Boards nearly unanimously passed relevant resolutions on conferring an honorary doctorate to John Paul II.¹⁹ As the Pope, through His communication channels, wished that all requirements of the University Regulations for Awarding Honorary Doctorates would be met also for His doctorate, the Senate of the Jagiellonian University asked senates of two other Polish universities – Warsaw University and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań – for their opinions in that case. At Warsaw University, such an *Opinion* was drafted by Professor Aleksander Gieysztor, the then President of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Highlighting diverse lasting bonds of the Pope with the Jagiellonian University, he declared, among others, that “this intended *honoris causa* doctorate of all disciplines from the Jagiellonian University will become a unique act of double significance. Firstly, this will be a tribute paid by the oldest university to the Pole who holds the highest office in the Catholic Church. Secondly, this will be the strongest manifestation that the academic community has at its disposal to express its recognition to a scholar, an academic professor, an intellectual and a writer.”²⁰ Making a reference to the great role of John Paul II, not only in the life of the Church but for the whole humankind, the Pope’s numerous pilgrimages, as well as his scientific and literary output, Professor Gieysztor concluded his *Opinion* with a statement that the awarding of an honorary doctorate to John Paul II by the Jagiellonian University “will venerate the already great Pope and the outstanding Embodiment of an intellectual element of our mankind.”²¹ Professor Jarosław Maciejewski, who prepared an *Opinion* for the Senate of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, in an extensive text-essay, depicted the figure of John Paul II, using for that purpose a whole box of colours, lights and shrewd observations. He stressed that the conferral of an honorary doctorate to John Paul II by the Jagiellonian University “not only will be an expression of the highest recognition for his merits but also an act of gratitude

¹⁹ The texts of the resolutions adopted by individual Faculty Boards, as well as the results of the voting are given by Wojciech M. Bartel in the cited book *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński...*, pp. 32-55. The review of this information shows that altogether 31 independent research fellows participated in the voting. Altogether, 311 people voted in favour, 1 person – against, 5 people abstained from voting and 1 person cast a spoilt vote.

²⁰ *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński...*, p. 56.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 57.

for the fact that he repeatedly made references to his Cracow roots of his intellectual profile, thereby spreading the global fame of the Jagiellonian University.”²²

To raise the importance of the event involving the conferral of an honourable doctorate to the Pope, Józef A. Gierowski, the Rector, convened an extraordinary sitting of the Senate at 12 May 1983, i.e. the Feast of the Jagiellonian University, commemorating the date of issuing the royal charter of its foundation by King Casimir the Great (12 May 1364). At the sitting the senators of the Jagiellonian University, in a secret ballot, unanimously voted in favour of the resolution on granting an *honoris causa* doctorate to John Paul II “upon a univocal petition of all university governing bodies.” In justification of the resolution, among other words, the following was written: “In John Paul II’s thought and acts, the issues of culture, and in particular of science, have always been a matter of utmost care.”²³ The members of the Senate, at the same solemn sitting, decided about an opportunity to participate in the ceremony, which according to the tradition must be held in *Collegium Maius* lecture hall, by other people concerned, including independent research fellows and representatives of other groups of the academy. And that is what happened.²⁴

It was decided to officially inform the Pope about the Senate’s resolution to grant him an honorary doctorate. A unique opportunity to do so occurred. A delegation of the Jagiellonian University was going to Rome to award an *honoris causa* doctorate to Professor Karolina Lanckorońska, an eminent scholar but at the same time a sponsor of science and culture, who, as a stateless person, but also due to her old age (85 years) could not come to Cracow to accept this honour. John Paul II hosted the delegation of the Jagiellonian University Senate on 30 May. In the course of that meeting Rector Gierowski informed the Pope about the resolution of the University Senate of 12 May and officially asked him to accept the title of *honoris causa* doctor of the Jagiellonian University. As he

²² Ibidem, p. 63.

²³ Ibidem, p. 60.

²⁴ In the course of the talks with the government authorities responsible for the arrangement of John Paul II’s pilgrimage, it was agreed that a significant number of faculty representatives and students would be let into the courtyard and cloisters of *Collegium Maius*. Finally 70 seats were reserved in the cloisters for retired professors as well as docents and habilitated doctors. Altogether 588 people (incl. 125 representatives of junior faculty members, 125 students, 208 people who were not faculty members, and 60 seats for representatives of other Cracow universities) were let in.

wrote many years later, the Pope “took a favourable position towards the Senate’s request and expressed his willingness to accept the conferred title.”²⁵

As a special announcement of John Paul’s visit to the Jagiellonian University a big exhibition was launched, entitled *John Paul II. The Output*. This opened on 16 June 1983 in the Jagiellonian Library. The exhibition showed more than 300 exhibits from the collection of the Library and the Jagiellonian University Archives.²⁶

John Paul II arrived in Cracow on 21 June 1983, in the evening, on the sixth day of his second pilgrimage to his homeland. In the morning of the following day, at 8.15 a.m., having visited, on his way, the University Collegiate Church of St. Anne, he arrived with his whole suite at the *Collegium Maius* building. Having been welcomed by Rector Gierowski, the four deputy rectors and Professor Stanisław Waltoś, the director of the Jagiellonian University Museum, the Pope stopped for a prayer in St. John Kanty’s Chapel,²⁷ and then entered the lecture hall.²⁸ The state authorities were represented by Minister Benon Miśkiewicz.²⁹ Af-

²⁵ J.A. Gierowski, *Starania o wizytę...*, p. 266.

²⁶ These were manuscripts, books, photographs, prints and theatre posters connected with Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II. The exhibition was supervised by Jan Pirożyński, PhD, Director of Jagiellonian Library.

²⁷ A little-known episode of the Pope’s visit to the Jagiellonian University should be recalled here. In the former cell of St. John Kanty, converted into a chapel, the Pope was met by Professor Karol Estreicher, a retired director of the Jagiellonian University Museum. Professor Estreicher, together with other retired university professors, was invited to the meeting with John Paul II. Being seriously ill, he resigned from his place in the cloisters where retired professors had their seats. Instead, deceiving the security services, he hid in an old confession box standing in St. John Kanty’s Chapel. When John Paul II entered the chapel, Estreicher went out of the confession box and greeted the Pope. There are no accounts of this brief but first of all very non-conventional encounter between John Paul II and Professor Estreicher famous for, at times, his eccentric behaviour.

²⁸ Altogether 102 sitting and 31 standing places, the latter for members of the Cracow Academic Choir were reserved in *Collegium Maius* lecture hall.

²⁹ It must be noted that Rector Gierowski invited Professor Henryk Jabłoński, a historian and, at that time, the Chairman of the State Council, to the ceremony. He, however, which was symptomatic, refused to come. The Jagiellonian University Archives hold a telegram of 14 June 1983 addressed to Rector Gierowski and signed by the Head of Staff to the State Council of the following content: *Mr Chairman sincerely thanks Mr Rector for an invitation to the ceremony held on 22 June this year. However, Mr Chairman cannot come to Cracow earlier than 23 June (CV 8)*. It should be added that despite official reservation the top government officials from Warsaw expressed towards the Pope, after all, they were looking, in their own way, for contacts with him. Already on the same day (22 June) when the Pope received an honorary doctorate

ter listening to the song *Gaude Mater Polonia*, Rector Gierowski made a welcoming speech concluded with the words: “Holy Father! At some point historians will try to establish what the Jagiellonian University was for you. They will be looking for the influence of the tradition, these values that were proclaimed by the most eminent scholars connected with our university, or an impact of professors whom Karol Wojtyła met at it. For us the most crucial is your own testimony, Your Holiness, your permanent – both in Cracow and in Rome – kindness and interest in our academic community, your numerous references to your bonds with our *Alma Mater*. Being thankful for this testimony and encouraged by it, we ask you, our beloved Holy Father, that you will accept an *honoris causa* doctorate of the Jagiellonian University as a sign of our unity with you.”³⁰

The Latin text of the diploma was read by Deputy Rector Andrzej Kopff. Having received the diploma from the hands of Rector Gierowski and deeply touched, John Paul II, recalled his various bonds with the University, including his studies in the Faculty of Polish Studies, in the manner so far absolutely unknown in the history of papacy. He then thanked the university for the received distinction, saying: “Today, in these truly exceptional circumstances, I, John Paul II, stand in front of these portraits, in front of this grand academic genealogy of my Jagiellonian *Alma Mater* and as this is due for the mother, I kiss her hands to demonstrate with this gesture how big a debt I incurred. I myself, together with all my nation. If you want me, ”Your Magnificence and the Reverend Senate, to accept an *honoris causa* doctorate, I am doing this in the spirit of “obedience towards *Alma Mater* even through the rules of my office do not provide for it.”³¹ Immediately after granting an honorary doctorate diploma to the Holy Father, the university choir sang the national anthem of Poland while the Pope put his signature in *The Royal Book*.³² Then came the

from the Jagiellonian University, in the late evening, the Holy Father met general Wojciech Jaruzelski at Wawel Royal Castle (the meeting lasted more than 1,5 hours). On the following day (23 June) Professor Jabłoński arrived in Cracow to participate in the evening hours in the official farewell ceremony of the Eminent Guest in Cracow-Balice Airport.

³⁰ *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński...*, p. 81.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

³² *The Royal Book (Księga Królewska)*, i.e. the manuscript No. 1795 kept in *Collegium Maius*, purchased in 1574 prior to a visit of King Henry III of France (who from 1573 to 1575 was also King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) to the University. It works as a visitors' book. The first entry was made by King Henry III. Later their entries made also Stephen Báthory, Anna Jagiellon, Sigismund III Vasa, Władysław IV Vasa, John III Sobieski and Stanisław August Poniatowski, kings and a queen of Poland. *The Book* also holds entries made by Jan Zamoyski,

moment of the presentation of the gifts. Deputy Rector Maria Sarnecka-Keller gave the Holy Father a commemorative medal made by Professor Bronisław Chromy, a sculptor, depicting, on one side, a portrait of the Pope – the Pole. Alojzy Gołębiowski, Deputy Rector, presented the Pope with a copy of the album *Karol Wojtyła at the Jagiellonian University* in a special cover,³³ Deputy Rector Jan Błoński gave the Honourable Guest a copy of a 18th century wood engraving from the collection of Jagiellonian Library while students handed over ... a white student's cap. On occasion of making this symbolic gift, they complained to the Pope that a few of their colleagues from the Faculty of Philology had not been admitted to the courtyard of *Collegium Maius* by the state security services. The Holy Father instructed them to say hello to their colleagues from him.³⁴ For his part, the Holy Father gave the University a reprint of the first copy of Ptolemy's *Cosmography* and three papal medals (gold, silver and bronze). Then the Holy Father left the lecture hall and accompanied by the hosts went through Copernicus' Room and Ambroży Grabowski's Room to the Room of Professor Antoni Żołędziowski, a great benefactor of the University, the multi-tenure rector, where the Pope, among others, looked through two visitors' books of the University Museum. From there he went to the cloisters of *Collegium Maius* to greet faculty members and students gathered on the courtyard. He started his brief address from an explanation of the essence of a fifteen minute academic 'grace' period³⁵, and then moved once again to thank the University for the awarded honour. He concluded his address with the words: "I would like to be

Royal Secretary; Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, Grand Crown Marshal; and Marina Mniszech, the famous Polish "tsaritsa". *The Book* also includes entries made by Tadeusz Kościuszko; Franz Joseph I of Austria; Wilhelm II, German Emperor; Hubert Clark Hoover, President of the United States; Ferdinand Foch, Marshal of France; and Queen Elizabeth II. One can also find there entries made by Józef Piłsudski, Marshal of Poland; Ignacy Mościcki, President of Poland; and papal nuncios to Poland: Hipolit Aldobrandini (later Pope Clement VIII) and Achilles Ratti (later Pope Pius XI) and many other Polish and foreign dignitaries.

³³ The album, edited by Professor Leszek Hajdukiewicz and issued in 800 numbered copies, included a list of 156 documents held in collections of the Jagiellonian University and connected with Karol Wojtyła - John Paul II as well as facsimiles of 16 documents from the time of his studies at the university. The Holy Father received copy No. 1; copy No. 2 is kept in the Jagiellonian University Archives.

³⁴ Cf. B. Sławiński, *Kulisy nadania doktoratu...*, "Alma Mater" 104-105 (2008), pp. 78-83.

³⁵ The Pope found it appropriate to recall the long-standing tradition of the 15 minute academic 'grace' period, which he followed himself, delaying his arrival at *Collegium Maius* by a quarter of an hour.

deeply connected with and loyal to everything in which this community [of the Jagiellonian University] lives, for the well-being of Polish culture, the nation and the humankind.”³⁶ Having blessed all people gathered, he left *Collegium Maius*.

On 6 July, Rector Józef A. Gierowski sent for the attention of the Holy Father sincere thanks for his visit to the Jagiellonian University and the acceptance of an honorary doctorate. Among others, he wrote that the Holy Father’s visit is “the subject of continuous reflection and contemplation while [the Holy Father’s] kind words became an encouragement for strengthening efforts to maintain the University’s standing worth Its Great Alumnus.”³⁷

³⁶ *Jan Paweł II a Uniwersytet Jagielloński...*, p. 82.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 85. Rector Józef Gierowski was recalled, after many years, that in autumn 1983, General Wojciech Jaruzelski paid, quite unexpectedly, a visit to the Jagiellonian University. He visited *Collegium Maius* and also a lecture room where Professor Jerzy Wyrozumski was running a class for students. In the Rector’s view, that visit was meant to point out, in a way, to the university authorities that he too, “the ruler” of the Polish People’s Republic of the time of martial law, could visit the university.