

## The Church in Poland under Martial Law

On 5 October Archbishop Glemp, the Primate of Poland, cancelled his trip to the Vatican for the canonisation of Fr Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan who gave his life for another prisoner in Auschwitz concentration camp. The Archbishop, who was to travel with a party of 40 bishops and prelates, decided to stay behind for fear that a new law promulgated on 9 October dissolving all unions in Poland, including Solidarity, would lead to further tensions. After the canonisation on 10 October he was to have travelled to the United States. During the ceremony in the Vatican the Pope referred to the banning of Solidarity, saying: "Depriving the Solidarity trade union of legal status resulted in strong objections and protests from the international public. This act is a violation of the fundamental rights of man and society. The Holy See and the Church in Poland have done all in their power to prevent such a violation and they will continue to defend the legitimate rights of the working people".

In Poland, Archbishop Glemp stated in a bitter sermon that "the hopes of workers have been brushed aside" and that, in spite of the ban, the ideal of Solidarity could not be erased from hearts and minds of the people.

On 10 October Stefan Bareła, the Bishop of Częstochowa, issued a pastoral letter expressing his deep sympathy with the town's secondary school children who had been assaulted by the police while leaving a church service marking the beginning of the school year. The police used tear gas and many children were detained and beaten up at police stations, some of them so severely that they had to be taken to hospital. In his letter, Bishop Bareła also protested against the removal of crosses from certain classrooms, which "violated the religious freedom promised by the authorities".

On 30 October Archbishop Glemp received a peace prize from the Catholic Cultural Centre in Taranto in Italy. The Archbishop, speaking at a press conference, said that church-state relations in Poland have not been broken off and expressed the hope that he might soon have a meeting with General Jaruzelski. When asked about the Solidarity call for an all-out strike on 10 November, he replied that the Church is opposed to it as it might lead to further reprisals.

After the meeting between the Archbishop and General Jaruzelski on 8 November, a joint communiqué was released officially inviting the Pope to visit Poland on 18 June 1983. The statement stated that it was in the common interests of Church and State to maintain "calm, social peace and production".

At another meeting between the government and the Episcopate on 29 November it was decided that more Catholic Intellectuals' Clubs (KIKs) could be reopened. So far only six out of fifty such clubs, which mainly came into existence during the Solidarity period, have been able to resume their activities.

On 3 December the Polish bishops assembled for a plenary conference in Warsaw, after which they issued a statement sharply criticising the government for violating the moral order and insisting on their right to speak out against injustices and human rights violations. They particularly deplored the outlawing of Solidarity "as if no other way existed at a time when our people are trying to find a way towards peace and social order. Such an act struck at the heart of our whole society", said the bishops.

On 7 December Archbishop Glemp met some three hundred priests of the Warsaw diocese and was subjected to a barrage of criticism. This highlighted the deep division between rank-and-file clergymen and the Archbishop. He was accused of pursuing a policy of appeasement without paying due attention to the moral issues involved. Some saw his policies as being based on the tradition of the pre-war National Democracy Party but failing to distinguish the essential difference between Marshal Piłsudski and General Jaruzelski, as well as that between religion and politics. He was accused of supporting a government rejected by the people for the sake of spurious concessions such as new churches and the Pope's visit, while forgetting that eventually this same government will turn against the Church. Solidarity, formerly officially supported by the Church, had now been abandoned. The people were desperate while the priests enjoyed relative immunity under martial law. One priest suggested that the Archbishop should lead a demonstration of clergymen against ZOMO (the militia) to show the people that

"we are prepared to suffer with them", rather than giving admonitions on how they (the actors for instance) should cooperate with the regime.

On 16 December Archbishop Glomp and Archbishop Dąbrowski, the secretary of the Polish Episcopate, sent a letter to the Marszałek Sejmu (Speaker of Parliament) criticising the new bill which, in exchange for suspending martial law, imposes tighter conditions on the population. "The concept of tying workers to their factory, reminiscent of feudal serfdom, is particularly unacceptable," said the bishops. They dismissed the bill as pretentious, because the lifting of martial law was replaced by equally repressive measures, such as a new regulation allowing for dismissal of anyone who "sows social unrest".

The Kraków Solidarity Bulletin, published underground, reported on 3 December that the police stations have been given the task of preparing lists of "extremists" among the priests but these were to exclude the names of those working with bishops in diocesan offices. Also the priests working in large urban parishes or professors at Catholic seminaries were to be excluded as they would be able to attract popular support.

The Press Office of the Polish Episcopate issued a strong protest against an article by Jerzy Urban, the government spokesman, who in the weekly *Tu i Teraz* (Here and Now) No. 5, 1983 used such words as "filth" or "anti-semitic" when describing the work of the recently canonised martyr, Fr Kolbe.

According to Polish television 390 new churches are under construction in Poland, which represents an enormous increase in the permits given to the Church. Between 1971-81, for instance, only 1,072 permits were given, mainly to reconstruct or extend the existing churches or chapels, while hardly any new Catholic churches were allowed to be built.

On 23 February Kazimierz Świton, the founder of the Silesian Free Trade Unions, was detained inside the church by the police in Katowice during a service for the victims of martial law. This is regarded in Poland as an unprecedented transgression of church autonomy. Lech Wałęsa, who was to attend the service, was prevented from coming.

On 23-24 December, in a communiqué issued after a two-day plenary conference, the Polish bishops said: "Society expects that at least some of the urgent social problems of our country will be settled before the [Pope's] visit. An amnesty is generally expected for those sentenced after the imposition of martial law. Full social justice for all citizens is also expected."

The 8th National Congress of the "Oasis" renewal movement took place from 25-28 February in the Jasna Góra Monastery at Częstochowa. Cardinal\* Glomp sent a letter to Fr Franciszek Blachnicki, the founder of the movement, blessing the participants. The movement and Fr Blachnicki himself have come under strong attack from the authorities. To counteract this the conference of the Polish Episcopate expressed its support for "Oasis".

On 21 March Henryk Jabłoński, Chairman of the Council of State, formally invited Pope John Paul II to visit Poland from 16 to 22 June. Two days later details of the papal visit were announced: the Pope will visit Warsaw, Niepokalanów, Częstochowa, Poznań, St Anna's Mountain, Wrocław, Piękary Śląskie and Kraków. Leaders of the underground Solidarity movement have said they would not organise any demonstrations during the Pope's visit.

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\* Archbishop Glomp was created Cardinal on 5 January: see p. 205 — *Ed.*

## New Cardinals in Eastern Europe

On 5 January this year 18 new cardinals from various countries were nominated by Pope John Paul II. Four of them were from Eastern Europe: Józef Glomp (whose

appointment was not unexpected), Joachim Meisner of East Germany, Franjo Kuharić of Yugoslavia, and most surprisingly, Jūlijs Vaivods of Latvia.