

**Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski**  
*Metropolitan of Krakow*

**Welcoming the participants of the Symposium  
Krakow, White Seas 20th October 2022**

Eminence,  
Your Excellencies with the Metropolitan Archbishop of Vilnius, Gintaras Grušas,  
President of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE),  
Dear Brothers in Priesthood,  
Reverend Sisters,  
Dear young friends, representatives of almost 30 European countries who came to our  
Symposium,

We were supposed to meet here in 2020, on the centenary of the birth of St. John Paul II the Great. Unfortunately, the pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19) meant that only now we are given the opportunity to find ourselves in Krakow, in the city beloved by John Paul II - in the city of his university studies, labour work at the Solvay Factory during the cruel German occupation at the times of the Second World War, studies in a secret major seminary, research and pastoral work: vicar, auxiliary bishop, archbishop and cardinal - in the city about which he spoke in June 1979 at the end of his First Pilgrimage to Poland: "Before I leave you, I wish to give one more look at Krakow from here, at this Krakow where every stone and every brick is dear to me - and I will look at Poland from here ..." . Today, in the name of this Krakow, I greet all of you very warmly.

Here, in Krakow, six years ago, at the end of July 2016, World Youth Day was held. Holy Father Francis said to the youth then: "Beloved young people, we did not come into the world to 'vegetate', to spend our lives comfortably, to make life a couch that would put us to sleep; on the contrary, we came for another reason, to leave a permanent mark. It is very sad when we go through life without leaving a trace. And when we choose convenience, confusing happiness with consumption, then the price we pay is very, very high: we lose our freedom. (...) Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and convenience. To follow Jesus, you need a little courage, you have to decide to replace the couch with a pair of shoes that will help you walk on the roads that you have never dreamed of or even thought of." That is why, Pope Francis called young people to rise spiritually from their narcotic couch, to stand up and walk their way.

The motto of the current Krakow meeting of representatives of the youth pastoral of Churches across Europe, organized under the auspices of the CCEE, also speaks about the uprising. It reads: "Get up! Christ is calling you", referring to the following event described in the Gospel of St. Mark: "When [Jesus] was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, the blind beggar Bartimaeus son of Timeus was sitting by the road. Upon hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out: 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So, they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he

jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' – Jesus asked him. The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.' 'Go' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10, 46b-52).

What follows from this evangelical event is that we must first cry out to Jesus in trust, seeing only Him as our salvation. We must then have confidence that He will hear us and will be willing to engage in a saving conversation with us. Thirdly, we must have support for this hope in other members of the Church. Finally, we must have a daily experience of faith that heals us and enables us to follow Christ faithfully today. In truly difficult times: the era of post-truth, the hard recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, and above all, the cruel war that was started just beyond our eastern border by Russia attacking Ukraine.

Our spiritual confrontation with the challenges of modern times is to be at the same time the most fruitful preparation for next year's World Youth Day, which will take place in Lisbon, under *Mary got ready and hurried* (Luke 1, 39). Let the present meeting with the figure of St. John Paul II the Great and his episcopal and papal call "Totus Tuus", which is a quotation from the prayer contained in the *Treatise on the true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* by St. Louis Maria Grignion de Montfort (1673–1716): "I am all yours and all that is mine belongs to you. I accept you with all of myself. Give me Your heart, Mary!", would make us sensitive to the attitude of listening to and completely fulfilling God's will through the humble and courageous Handmaid of the Lord.

All participants of the Krakow and European Symposium "Get up! Christ is calling you" with all my heart I wish you fruitful deliberations, wonderful reflections, deep prayers, as well as establishing beautiful friendships and acquaintances, which is so characteristic for all young people around the world. God bless!