

National Pilgrimage of Catholic Action Marking the 30th Anniversary of the Association's Re-establishment

Częstochowa, June 19–20, 2026

During the jubilee celebrations marking the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of Catholic Action in Poland, representatives of the association's diocesan and parish structures from across the country gathered at Jasna Góra to thank God for thirty years of activity and to pray for blessings upon the future mission of Catholic Action.

The pilgrimage began with a ceremonial jubilee session in the St. John Paul II Hall. The opening lecture was delivered by Prof. Jan Żaryn, who discussed the role of the laity in the life of the Church and the nation, emphasizing the importance of lay responsibility for evangelization and the presence of Christian values in social life.

The session also featured a presentation by Ms. Elżbieta Olejnik titled "The History and Heritage of Catholic Action in Poland." Tracing the development of Catholic Action from its interwar origins, she recounted the circumstances of its reactivation following the systemic changes and highlighted the association's spiritual and organizational legacy. She emphasized that the rich history of Catholic Action entails a commitment to responsibly undertaking the lay apostolate within the contemporary Church and in social life.

Participants also heard reflections and recollections from former presidents of the National Institute of Catholic Action, Ms. Halina Szydełko and Ms. Urszula Furtak. Sharing experiences from their service, they recalled key events and challenges that marked the growth of Catholic Action over the years. Andrzej Kamiński, the current president of the National Institute of Catholic Action, also addressed the gathering, thanking all members for their commitment, their witness of faith, and their dedication to the association's development.

Delegates from the International Forum of Catholic Action (FIAC) representing Romania and Malta also conveyed greetings and congratulations on the occasion of the jubilee. In their addresses, they emphasized the importance of unity and international cooperation among Catholic Action communities, expressing gratitude for the Polish Catholic Action's participation in the Forum's activities and wishing for continued fruitful development and an abundance of God's graces in the fulfillment of its apostolic mission.

Representatives of organizations and groups collaborating with Catholic Action also spoke during the jubilee session. Representatives of the Civitas Christiana Association and the Catholic Youth Association conveyed their best wishes and words of appreciation marking the 30th anniversary of the association's re-establishment. In their speeches, they highlighted the significance of their long-standing cooperation, expressed gratitude for the witness of faith and the commitment shown by Catholic Action members, and voiced their hope for continued joint efforts for the sake of the Church and the common good.

In the evening, at 8:00 PM, the pilgrims attended Holy Mass celebrated in the Chapel of Our Lady of Częstochowa. The Eucharist was presided over by Bishop Marek Mendyk, the

National Ecclesiastical Assistant for Catholic Action. In his homily, he encouraged them to courageously undertake the lay apostolate and to remain faithful to Christ and His Church.

Afterwards, the pilgrims took part in the Jasna Góra Appeal, during which they entrusted Catholic Action in Poland—its members, ecclesiastical assistants, and all initiatives undertaken in the service of the Church and the Homeland—to the Mother of God.

The second day of the pilgrimage began at the Archcathedral of the Holy Family in Częstochowa, where members of Catholic Action from across Poland gathered in large numbers for communal prayer, accompanied by their banners. The pilgrims were welcomed by the Metropolitan of Częstochowa, Archbishop Wacław Depo, who expressed his gratitude for their presence and their commitment to the life of the Church.

Andrzej Kamiński, President of the National Institute of Catholic Action, also addressed the gathering, thanking the participants for their large turnout as well as for their daily witness of faith and active service to the Church and the Homeland. He encouraged members of Catholic Action to courageously undertake their apostolic mission and to build unity within their parish and diocesan communities. During the meeting at the archcathedral, a ceremonial presentation of relics of St. John Paul II also took place. The relics were entrusted to a mission in Peru and a parish in Myszków as a sign of spiritual bonds, a means of strengthening faith, and a way to foster devotion to the holy Polish Pope. Afterwards, the participants set out for Jasna Góra, reciting the Rosary and entrusting the intentions of the Church, the Homeland, and all Catholic Action communities to the Mother of God.

The focal point of the jubilee celebrations was a solemn Mass at Jasna Góra, presided over by Bishop Piotr Jarecki—the first National Ecclesiastical Assistant of Catholic Action in Poland—who also delivered the homily. In his sermon, he recounted the history of the association's re-establishment and outlined the current tasks facing lay Catholics, encouraging them to bear courageous witness to their faith in social and public life.

A special moment of the celebration was the reading of a message of greeting and a blessing addressed to the participants by the Holy Father, Leo XIV. The pilgrims received the papal message with gratitude, expressing their thanks for the remembrance, spiritual closeness, and apostolic blessing.

During the jubilee celebrations, individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Catholic Action in Poland were honored. Special recognition was awarded to Ms. Halina Szydełko and Fr. Prof. Tadeusz Borutka, whose long-standing work and commitment to the development of Catholic Action were acknowledged by the jubilee participants and the association's leadership.

Representatives of Catholic Action from Romania and Malta, representing the International Forum of Catholic Action (FIAC), also attended the event, highlighting the jubilee's international character and the unity of lay Catholics engaged in the apostolate.

The pilgrimage culminated in the Stations of the Cross held along the Jasna Góra ramparts. Reflecting on the successive stations of the Lord's Passion, participants entrusted the

affairs of the Church, the Homeland, and the future of Catholic Action to Christ. At the conclusion, the pilgrims laid flowers at the monument to St. John Paul II—the patron of Catholic Action in Poland—giving thanks for his spiritual legacy and the inspiration that led to the association's reactivation thirty years ago.

This jubilee pilgrimage was a time of prayer, gratitude, and community. It served as a beautiful testament to the vitality of Catholic Action and its enduring mission of service to God, the Church, and the Homeland. The thirty years since the association's reactivation offer not only an occasion for reflection and taking stock but also a call to continue courageously pursuing the apostolic mission in a spirit of responsibility for the Church and the common good.

President of the Board of KIAK

Andrzej Kamiński











