

# POLISH POEMS

## INTRODUCTION

*Translated from Polish to English by Danuta Romanowska. Organized by Carole MacClennan in 2021 under the direction of Father Johann Roten, S.M.*

The Marian Library has a collection of mainly Marian Polish poems, both older and contemporary, translated into English by Danuta Romanowska. Selected to illustrate the wealth and variety of Polish Marian devotion and spirituality, they reflect what Pope John Paul II said about the Black Madonna of Czestochowa and the people of Poland: “The Poles are accustomed to link with this place, this shrine, the many happenings of their lives: the various joyful and sad moments, especially the solemn, decisive moments, the occasions of responsibility, such as the choice of the direction for one's life, the choice of one's vocation, the birth of one's children, the final school examinations, and so many other occasions” (Act of Consecration to the Mother of God, June 4, 1979, Czestochowa).

Mary, Mother and Queen of Poland, is the enduring listener, the faithful support of the faithful, suffering with and for the people, but victorious in adversity and hardship. She is Our Lady for all seasons, all classes of society, and she is present everywhere in famous shrines and humble wayside chapels.

These poems are in more than one sense part of Romanowska's spiritual legacy. They attest to her love and dedication to the "Polish Madonna," which is a reference not only to her personal attachment to the Mother of God, but also to her commitment to Polish poetry and culture. If religion gives culture depth and ultimate meaning, it is the privilege of culture to add beauty and new revelation to religion. Romanowska knew this from the heart and gave it expression in this harvest of love. She had a dedicated companion on this literary journey in the person of Carole MacClennan, who with her wisdom and pen helped to build bridges between cultures.

### **VIRGIN MARY, ENDURING LISTENER**

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Queen of May  
To the Immaculata  
Yearning

### **MARY, LOVING MOTHER**

Let Us Sit Together  
Loving and Good Mother  
*Mamo*  
Mary! You Are Our Mother  
Mother's Eyes  
Mother's Face  
Mother's Hands  
My Mother  
My Mother's Black Rosary  
Step Into My Life  
To Mother of God Gromniczna  
Vocation  
When a Child Is Sick  
You Are Everything, Mary

### **MARY, SUPPORT OF THE FAITHFUL**

Begging for Your Eyes  
Be My Lighthouse  
Be With Us  
Holy Mother's Hands  
Lady of Ludzmierz  
Listening in Love  
Mother  
Mother (Do This for Us)  
Offer Us to God  
Permit Me to Praise You, Most Holy Lady  
Prayer  
Prayer for the Successful Election of the Pope  
Total Consecration to the Mother of God  
Tune to God  
Votive Prayer of Ravensbruck Women Survivors  
Wanderer's Litany

### **MARY, VICTORIOUS HOLY MOTHER**

Holy Mother of Czestochowa  
Holy Mother of the Military  
Holy Mother of Ostra Brama  
Immaculata!

Mary  
Mother of the Roadside Chapels  
Our Lady – Comforter  
Road to Home  
Under Your  
Protection  
We/You

### **MARY, SUFFERING MADONNA**

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Silence  
You Cried, Mother

### **MARIAN SHRINES IN POLAND**

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Ostra Brama  
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Polonez  
Stoczek  
Stories from Old Figures  
They Do Not Have Wine  
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Visit to Jazlowiec

### **ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II**

Fourth Anniversary of the Death of Pope John Paul II  
John Paul II at Zywiecczyzna, 22 May 1995  
Mother of the Living  
The Black Madonna, "Mother" of John Paul II  
To the Polish Pine  
United With You

## **CHRISTMAS POEMS**

At Jesus' Manger  
Christ's Birth  
Highlanders' Carol  
Holiday Greeting  
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## **POEMS AND PRAYERS OFFERED TO GOD**

At Supper  
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Be Merciful  
Christ  
Cross  
Fantasia of the People  
Gift  
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I Believed  
Imagine: The Cross!  
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Only the Word  
Our Father  
Parable of the Father  
Prayer For Me  
Question  
Sounds of the World  
Sunbeam  
You Are With Me

## VIRGIN MARY, ENDURING LISTENER

### ANNUNCIATION

Time came to a halt  
when the angel touched your arm  
and rustled in a dignified bow.

Then you returned from the paradise of meditation;  
simple words,  
hot like the sun at noon time,  
poured into your open heart.

The stillness chosen  
to be a guest in your heart  
answered with an echo of love.

And the angel carried the fiat of salvation,  
the most precious pearl in history,  
before the face of the Father.

You remained in silence  
on your knees;  
in your heart bloomed  
new heavenly apple blossoms.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

### AVE MARIA

Hills, gentle as the verses of the Gospel,  
Women at the well,  
And a glassy sky through which are visible  
Pigeons, like an orchard of angels,  
Floating above white houses.

Gabriel flew slowly with difficulties  
Because he had to announce the news,  
So unexpected  
That he felt himself bend under such a weight.  
Shivering, he did not know  
If a woman made of body and blood would understand.

Messengers who deliver unexpected news  
Are also as taken by surprise as those who receive it.

Flying low above the street  
He was very happy to be unnoticed by the women. . .  
Gabriel was noticed only by himself  
And a slender girl who, with quiet movement,  
Pushed the hair from her forehead.  
When he approached her,  
His wings carelessly brushed her shadow.

They talked to each other in simple language,  
And if simple was their language,  
So much more complicated was their secret.

Great was his happiness  
When the girl with the forehead of azure,  
Without protest, accepted the news  
And folded in humility the palms of her hands  
On which rested the fate of humanity.

Gabriel quickly flew away  
Because before him was a great distance. . .  
He wanted before the night started  
To return to his home  
Built from the first page of the Gospel.

Tired, passing the well,  
He plunged in his feet,  
Hot from the flight.

– *Roman Brandstaetter* (1906-1987)

## CALM US

Virgin of Nazareth,  
Smiling and cheerful,  
for everyone you have time  
to lift up the downtrodden,  
to visit acquaintances,  
to give water to the thirsty,  
to comfort the sad with a good word,

to conquer the angry with a kind smile,  
to give your own life to every human.

Quiet Mother,  
teach us a peaceful life;  
keep us,  
Mary,  
in our escape from ourselves.

– *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## DAILY VISITATION

Through the singing blue sky,  
by the road covered with a carpet of field roses,  
with a heart blossoming with smiling bluebottles,  
walks the Immaculata.

She welcomes the praying flowers,  
bows to the child's cradle,  
lifts the head of the dying old one,  
waves to golden fields of grain,  
kneels on the foot path,  
and prays in the silence of the Annunciation.

Yesterday's road to Elizabeth  
blossoms every day of the Visitations  
when the Maiden from Nazareth  
visits the wine groves  
where she planted her *fiat*  
by the words of her agreement.

Be greeted!  
You are welcomed by the smile of the morning.  
Be greeted!  
Quiet Shepherdess of your Son's meadows,  
Be greeted!

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## GOD VISITS THE EARTH

Scattered grain sprouts towards life;

the sown gift is not silent.  
Heavy bunches of grapes promise wine;  
from the mature flowers falls the fruit.

She cannot keep this happiness for herself;  
the gift pushes her towards the people.  
She wants to share with her heart,  
to break it like bread,  
this great secret she hides within herself.

She runs through the hills,  
carrying God beneath her heart, which  
rushes towards heaven  
like a hungry bird.

The two relatives meet  
and understand  
that God visits the earth.

St. John bows to the Messiah,  
and billowing leaves in an air of joyfulness  
accompany her thanksgiving *Magnificat*,  
and Mary remains  
the Mother of New Times,  
the Mother calling from the desert.

People passing by  
do not realize the miracle.  
The sun was still shining  
and the dark nights were coming,  
but in the sky  
rose  
the Star  
of New Life.

- Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )

#### IMMACULATA OF THE SPRING\*

Flow out from the light of the morning rainbow,  
Covered by fog, like a light garment,  
Daughter of Earth –



Immaculata. . .  
Before her the earth in prayer is kneeling,  
Towards her, homeless orphans' hands  
Shine in morning prayer and rainbow ...  
Flow out, covered in light fog,  
Immaculata. . .  
Flow clean -- through the lowland earth,  
Between complaints, sadness, and misfortunes. . .  
Here a sign wakes up the fertile earth,  
There beauty -- birds are quiet. . .  
Flow... flow through the lowland earth,  
In a virginal, luminous aureole,  
Over unfortunate orphans bursting into tears,  
Immaculata. . .  
Over poor cottages, throw happiness,  
With light, wipe up the tears of the orphans.  
After her crossing, pains turn pale,  
For she grieves for the ill-fated.  
Shine... flow by the stars, through the air. . .  
After her, the breeze rustles and hums;  
To her, voices flow every day in the morning:  
"Immaculata!"

–*Wladyslaw Orkan (1875-1930)*

\*From the cycle, "IMMACULATA"

## I WILL SERVE YOU

In my days,  
wrapped up by the sun  
and in those that pinch,  
you are Lady,  
like the rainbow of goodness  
forever braided.

I do not have many words  
to define  
your most beautiful vigil.

A quiet song  
I will serve you,  
Ave Maria.

- *Maria Siarkiewicz*

## PRAYING VIRGIN

Listening Virgin,  
change the noise in my heart  
to the quiet of Nazareth;  
teach me to absorb the prayers of the plants  
and the heat in a grain of sand.

Virgin who gave birth in Bethlehem,  
Madonna to the end of time,  
Evangelist Eve of the New Generation,  
teach us to love silence and perseverance.  
Humility of Christmas night,  
place Jesus in my heart  
as in a manger. . .

Praying Virgin,  
Picture of simplicity,  
Mother of our prayers,  
teach us life;  
give us the power to last under the cross  
and the courage to enter under the roof  
of your house.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## QUEEN OF MAY

Queen of May,  
in love with the blue sky,  
with the flood of flowers,  
with the fragrance of the fields,  
with the songs of the birds.

Friend in love with God,  
Lady of warm mornings,  
Lilacs blossom in the fragrance of your smile.  
Graceful willow with golden hair cascading over the stream,  
in your shadow I rest.

Melody of the quiet night,  
you hold captive my arms  
which rise like the slender branches of the poplar tree  
in prayers of adoration.

I kneel on soft cushions under the trees  
while on the branches, birds are praying,  
flowers are singing hymns of adoration;  
I call to you in the stillness of twilight.

You come towards me by the avenue of fragrant chestnuts,  
Radiant Lady of my dreams.  
Often I do not see your figure,  
but I read by the sound of your steps  
that you walk with me.

Virgin with the heart of eternal spring,  
Confirm that my young life  
will bloom, not expire, in May.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## TO THE IMMACULATA

The last stars come out from their hiding place,  
the golden moon looks in the mirror of water,  
cars and streetcars are silent;  
through the window comes the messenger of the shining moon;  
a ray of hope  
rests on the face of the Immaculata.

Covered by a coat of silent prayer  
in the flickering smile of stars,  
under the eyelids of heaven  
looking always on me  
in the azure blue weather,  
I sing a song  
about the Immaculata.

The leaves have fallen from the trees,  
the flowers of the green lands become silent;  
by the white overcoat of roads  
comes the Immaculata.

A slender shape,  
similar to a poplar fluttering in the wind,  
hands held out in the gesture of invitation,  
a gentle smile like a ripe berry,  
and eyes full of brightness,  
in her hand a rosary.

Immaculata,  
Lady of silver mornings  
and pleasant sunsets,  
Dawn of night,  
Hope of return,  
Immaculata.

- Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )

## YEARNING

It was so long ago,  
but maybe just yesterday,  
when you heard the angel's words,  
and by your consent,  
hastened the fullness of time  
for God's revelation  
to fulfill the expectation  
of generations.

It was so long ago,  
but maybe just yesterday,  
when you went by  
the inspiration of the Holy Spirit  
to visit Elizabeth,  
singing the *Magnificat*.

It was so long ago,  
but maybe just yesterday,  
when in the quiet calm,  
the listening cosmos  
adored the Newborn  
God-Human in the manger.

It was so long ago,  
but maybe just yesterday,  
when the words of Simeon  
showed you the plan of salvation,  
and the shadow of the cross  
darkened a mother's hope.

It was so long ago,  
but maybe just yesterday,  
when your Son  
departed from home irrevocably --  
to give testimony to the truth  
by life and death on the gallows of the cross  
under which you stood, Mother,  
suffering quietly.

It was so long ago,  
but maybe just yesterday,  
when the light of the Resurrection  
dried out your tears,  
and you saw Him go  
to the Father,  
and your joy  
became united with eternity.

Millions of hearts,  
yesterday and today believe  
that He took you to Himself  
to be the fulfillment of prayers  
implored of the Omnipotent.

– *Janina Wojnarowska (1923-1979)*

## **MARY, LOVING MOTHER**

LET US SIT TOGETHER

For you, what is gold,  
tinkling corals,  
armfuls of flowers,  
and smoke from incense?  
You prefer tears mixed with pollen  
and knees praying around the altar.

Let us sit together  
in the shadow of night's silence.  
Allow me, Mother,  
to wipe up your tears,  
heal the wounds,  
and sing of joy.

With your free hand,  
hug me to your heart  
as you hug your Son.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## LOVING AND GOOD MOTHER

Mother,  
Czestochowa, Lourdes, Fatima,  
regardless of how I will call you,  
always in motherhood, you are the same.  
Loving and Good Mother,  
you give butterflies above the meadow,  
birds in the high clouds,  
dew drops on the rose petals,  
happiness during the day and quiet nights.  
For you the nightingale in the lilac shrub sings psalms,  
fish dance in the stream,  
the echo in the cliff carries your name far away  
when the waterfall calls for prayer.  
But I, simple singer in the chorus,  
for your glory -- together with all the world --  
carry a poem for you,  
like a bouquet of herbs from the August meadow.

– *Jerzy Tawlowicz*

## MAMO\*

Today I will not call you  
Mother  
or the Lady of Heaven;  
those are just the shadows of dawn.

I will not call you Star,  
even though you deliver happiness during the night,  
or Queen or Handmaid;  
I will not repeat empty words.

I will sit down, look in your eyes,  
and I will say,

*“MAMO!”*

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

\*Polish form of address meaning “Mom” or “Mommy”

## MARY! YOU ARE OUR MOTHER

Mary! You are our Mother and we are your children!  
In these few words, an ocean of comfort is contained  
Away from the soul's dark thoughts, sorrows, anxieties!  
Earth! You are not only a valley of sufferings!

Mary! You are our Mother solemnly given  
Through Jesus in His most terrible moment of death!  
You are our Mother most cherished, Mother beloved,  
Given to us in testament by your Son from the throne of the cross.

Mary! You are our Mother and we are your children!  
You are our refuge and you point the way to salvation!  
May your heart like a guiding star shine for us!  
May our tears be dried and our suffering relieved!

– *Mateusz Jez*

## MOTHER'S EYES

Every day I look  
into your eyes, Mother,  
and study the silent secrets,  
continually reading in them God  
stretching out hands towards me,  
and I recognize you  
and myself.

Mother of Worries,  
I hear the silent grievance  
of my wastefulness  
in tears that flow from your eyes,  
in the pain of your wounded face,  
in the coldness of my heart,  
and the kiss of Judas.

Your eyes, Mother,  
are the mirror of my heart,  
eyes that peel the scales from my eyes  
by the heat of your glance.

Look,  
Mother of the Bright Eyes,  
from your Dark Face  
with my eyes.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## MOTHER'S FACE

Mother's face,  
eyes of rapture,  
Guide with uncommon conviction. . .

Silent.

Hands point  
to the fruit of your humility.

Mother of people expelled from paradise,  
Undying hope of return,  
Brightness cut by sabers of darkness. . .

From the edge of your face to the edge of my heart  
grows eternal wandering.  
From the edge of silence to the edge of pleading  
stretches the call of awakened eagles.  
From the edge of prayer to the edge of rebellion  
rises the curse of thorns and thistles.

After all, from edge to edge  
is only a touch of trust.



- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## MOTHER'S HANDS

Open are Mother's hands,  
heavy, like a mature bunch of grapes,  
cracked palms,  
ravaged by the troubles collected from her children,  
swollen by the prayers of withering branches.

Mother's hands  
stretched out above the world,  
hands of eternal returns,  
hands, the hope of despair,  
hands of happy paths and drowned boats,  
hands, stillness after the storm,  
hands of weeping, broken trees,  
hands keeping the world in the axis of love.

Open are Mother's hands,  
full of God.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## MY MOTHER

The heart trembles  
before the delicate touch  
of Mother's face.

It is not easy to be your son.

Mother leans towards the cradle;  
her smile follows your steps.  
You live -- thanks to her ardent heart.

They go beside each other:  
Mothers,  
heavenly and earthly,  
two sisters.  
One thing joins them together:  
love.

On my shoulder I feel  
her blessing hand  
when I depart for duty  
on the road brightened by her glance.

Mother,  
Temple of Love,  
Eternal Expectation.

Mother,  
I thank you that I am in your heart  
as I was in your womb.

I remember that September day  
in the shadow of the linden tree  
that, like the arch of a cathedral,  
covered the head of the Madonna  
in a white habit  
and piled at her feet  
a large rosary.

I remember  
Mother's look,  
her blessing hand,  
her eyes overflowing with tears of separation,  
worries and happiness,  
and words  
that to this day are never silent,  
"Be a good priest."

Today,  
with my distant memories  
when I kneel to pray,  
I recognize in the face of the Mother of Jasna Gora  
two faces,  
pressed close in anxiety.

Warm. . .

Doves of Prayer.

- *Fr. Jan Pach* (1956- )

MY MOTHER'S BLACK ROSARY

My mother's black rosary--  
her life's code,  
  
precious,  
polished prayer beads,  
  
each one separately  
searches for the Light of Mystery.

During the lonely night,  
it is the alphabet of her soul;  
  
she whispered them to herself  
without ceasing.

She lifted her hands  
by the crown of hope,  
  
my mother's black rosary --  
my testament.

- *Lucyna Szubel (1932-2020)*

## STEP INTO MY LIFE

Mother of the good word,  
enter into my life  
as in the home of Elizabeth.  
Come with the breath of the Spirit  
so that my heart will feel you,  
and Jesus will enliven me.

Mother of the first transformation,  
my pitcher is empty;  
fill it to the brim with trust.  
Ask Jesus to change this  
in my entire life.

Mother of returning orphans,  
hand me the chalice of your life;  
let drop after drop  
pour out the pains of holiness;  
let it be fulfilled to the end

and in your arms I will rest,  
Waiting Mother.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

TO MOTHER OF GOD, GROMNICZNA\*

No great words are heard;  
you are silent,  
closed in a frame,  
with slashes on your face.

You speak to me with the look of truth,  
with the silence of simplicity  
and the smile of love.

You are close to me,  
tearing down the barriers of space  
and the chains of time;  
you walk with me  
like a shadow in the zenith of the sun.

Mother of the darkened face  
with a cheek like raped soil,  
Mother of silence,  
allow me to stand before you  
like a wax candle.

Ignite me with the fire of your Son;  
let me be covered from the storm  
with the mantle of your heart,  
burning with a clean flame  
and burning out at the end.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

\*"Mother of God of Candlemas" also called "Mother of God of the Blessed Thunder Candle." The faithful receive candles at Mass on Candlemas Day and light them at home during severe storms; the candles also are placed at the bedside of dying family members.

VOCATION

The day was gray -- like all the rest;  
I was not even thinking about God  
until my wandering glance  
met with yours  
in the shadow of the linden tree.  
Along with the accompaniment of the words of Kordecki,\*  
I heard the whispering of angels close by,  
"This is your Mother."

I believed.

It was not a miracle;  
gray days disappeared  
like water in the sea,  
but at least I knew  
that you were next to me.

Once said, "yes"  
rang out the echo of your trust,  
in spite of my shortcomings and daily betrayals.

Mother, without the shadow of a doubt,  
fill the emptiness of my preaching;  
come, like to Elizabeth;  
put your hand on my shoulder;  
let me feel the fervor of your trust.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

\*In 1655, Fr. Augustine Kordecki, prior of Jasna Gora Monastery, fearlessly processed with the Blessed Sacrament around the battlements and successfully led the defense of the monastery during the siege by Swedish troops.

## WHEN A CHILD IS SICK

When in some home somewhere,  
a child is sick with fever, cough,  
and looks as if it will not be healthy,  
when on the chair the night nurse falls asleep,  
who slips down as a bright cloud through the wall,  
with coat rustling on the carpet?  
Who comes out of the frame and bends over the sick?  
Who changes the compress and corrects the pillow?  
It is the Lady of Czestochowa, my Dear:  
it is our Holy Mother.

– *Kazimiera Illakowiczowna (1892-1983)*

## YOU ARE EVERYTHING, MARY

You are like the sunbeam  
On the frozen earth.  
You are like strong roots  
For the weak plants.

You are for the most poor  
Like a piece of bread,  
For the stars – the moon,  
For the earth - the peace of heaven.

You are like the stream  
For the very dry field,  
Like a plaintive song  
For the soul of the mountaineer.

You are everything, Mary,  
For us under the mountains,  
And we need nothing more  
Because you are with us!!!

- *Izabela Zajacowna*

## **MARY, SUPPORT OF THE FAITHFUL**

### BEGGING FOR YOUR EYES

Your black eyes,  
deep without a bottom,  
full like ripe apples  
in the garden of paradise,  
set in your face  
carved by tears  
look into the innermost recesses of my heart  
where the midday sun  
and the thoughts of brotherly hearts  
do not penetrate;

there you awake my shadow  
embedded in the pain of your face.

Look at me,  
Mother of the passing shadows,  
Give me eyes  
big as God and as man,  
eyes without the shadow of sins  
and the setting sun.  
I strip off the glasses  
of my world.

Give me your eyes,  
black and large,  
the eyes of a Mother  
bowing over a child's cradle.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## BE MY LIGHTHOUSE

Mother,  
I am like a breath of wind,  
like a drop of water  
in the face of the sea;  
let me sink into your deepness,  
cover me with yourself,  
throw into the deep your love;  
do not allow any drop of life to dry out.

I am like a lonely boat  
fighting with an angry sea;  
be for me the lighthouse,  
my Captain,  
Anchor of Hope,  
Harbor of Eternity.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## BE WITH US

Mary, we glorify you.  
You gave us Jesus,  
and he showed us the love of the Father.  
Be praised  
because you said, "yes," to God's love.  
Help us to accept the gift of faith,  
teach us sincere love  
and daily sacrifice.  
In our lives, long hours have already elapsed  
in which we did not know Jesus;  
therefore, be with us  
and give us hope in desperate hours.  
Give faith in the hour of despair  
and joy in the hour of pain.  
Give us courage in moments of weakness  
and teach us absolute obedience.

– *Henri Caldelari and Isabelle Barman*

## HOLY MOTHER'S HANDS

Tears fall, and each falling tear  
makes a knocking sound on the wooden kneeler.  
God passed! What is it to Him  
that the soul searches for truth?

Tears fall, full of grief,  
bitterness, complaints.  
God passed. He will never return  
to the earth; He is beyond reach.

Tears stop falling, for on my eyes  
are calm hands.  
Did God pass? Look how close,  
longing for burning love.

Even though I have stopped crying,  
still in my heart is a terrible fear,  
but Mary herself, from the altar,  
guides me to feel the presence of God.

I recognize your sweet face,  
your stary crown.



You brought me the Holy Child,  
halting my tears.

From now on, every time I cry,  
I will feel on my eyes your hands,  
hands most pure, most sweet,  
most compassionate, most holy.

- *Anna Gasiorska*

### LADY OF LUDZMIERZ\*

There were and there will be  
musicians, poets. . .  
who will compose  
paeans for your honor,  
but I, like the wild bird,  
only will sing songs for you  
and cry out in sorrow.

There were and there will be  
the powerful and important  
who will not begrudge you  
jewels and gold,  
Lady!  
But I, for your honor  
will place a wildflower at your feet  
and will put money  
in a beggar's hand.

There were and there will be  
priests and bishops  
who honor you  
with hymns to heaven.  
My prayers  
are simple like my words,  
but are sincere  
since they flow from my soul.

Be praised, O you,  
renowned for miracles!  
Care for me also

in my sickness.  
My family  
keep in good health.  
Give us, we Poles,  
peace, bread, work.

Give us your heart  
for we love you!  
The lame, the sick, the healthy  
remember you with gratefulness.  
Queen of Poles,  
Lady of Ludzmierz!  
Be our eternal  
support and refuge.

- *Andrzej Lewinski Kielpin*

\*Our Lady of Ludzmierz, represented by a 4 ft. tall wooden statue carved in the early fifteenth century, is also known as The Shepherdess of Podhale, the mountainous region in southern Poland. Pope John Paul II described Our Lady of Ludzmierz as our "Heavenly Protector."

## LISTENING IN LOVE

Daughter of God,  
chosen before the beginning of time,  
mirrored herself in the primordial waters.

Mother of the Word,  
revealed before sunrise,  
which in your shadow hid its rays  
so as not to burn the earth,

Beloved of the Spirit,  
wed to heaven,  
Dovecote of unified love,

Sister of humanity,  
listening in love,  
Three-fold Unity,  
Her Temple and my rest,

Comfort me in your heart.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## MOTHER

Strengthen our faith  
for many in the world are weak;  
the sun is covered with clouds of smoke;  
in the neon, much is not clear.

Murderous evil  
is overgrown with moss;  
stammering has replaced  
worthy words;  
vulgarity walks in the center of the city  
and hides behind village fences.

Hope --  
trembles --  
and it is more and more difficult to trust someone;  
truth is heavier than a stone.  
Condescend to sanctify truth with hope,  
O Holy Mother. Help!

With love,  
sanctify our hands  
to be ready to do good;  
to our tongue give freedom  
so that our words will be words of love,  
and your *Fiat* will change all to love.

- *Janina Fiolkowska Grudziadz*

## MOTHER (DO THIS FOR US)

Mother,  
Holy Mother and Nurturer,  
Madonna of Czestochowa,  
Holy Lady of Ostra Brama,  
Fatima,  
Ludzmierz,

Sorrowful Mother of Katyn,  
do this for us:

be the sun  
that shines on everyone  
and the earth that nourishes,  
not discriminating  
between the good and the bad.

Do not repel us from your plentiful breasts,  
but hug us to your bosom

and teach us love  
of neighbor  
as you taught  
your Son,  
Jesus Christ.

– *Edward Lipinski*

#### OFFER US TO GOD

Holy Mother, distributor of heavenly gifts  
with hands full of love,  
Smiling Country Woman,  
with a face tanned by the heat of the sun,  
Sanctuary of Bethlehem  
in which heaven met with earth  
through the Baby's cry in the manger,  
look down over the earth and offer us to God.

– *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

#### PERMIT ME TO PRAISE YOU, MOST HOLY LADY

Permit me to praise you at my own expense.  
Permit me to live, work, suffer, consume myself,  
and die for you and only for you.  
Permit me to bring the whole world to you.  
Permit me to contribute  
to an even bigger,  
to the greatest elevation of you.  
Permit me to bring to you such praise  
that as yet no one else has brought to you.  
Permit that others with my zeal

outstrip my elevation of you, and I theirs,  
so that by noble competition  
your praise will increase always higher and higher,  
always more powerful, as He who desires  
you to be elevated over all creatures.  
In you, God has been worshipped without comparison  
more than in all His saints.  
For you, God created the world.  
For you, God also called me to existence.  
From whence comes this luck to me?  
O, permit me to praise you,  
O most holy Lady!

– *Saint Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)*

## PRAYER

Mother of sailors,  
light our way.  
Mother,  
turn your holy eyes to us  
and see our tears,  
hasten the slow steps  
of those who do not think about you,  
and listen to our songs of supplication.  
Calm the winds on the sea,  
open hearts for love,  
console the faithful,  
be a lighthouse for wanderers  
and the morning star for the dying.  
Remember everyone.

- *Alessandro Parronchi (1914-2007)*

## PRAYER FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ELECTION OF THE POPE\*

Turn, Queen of the Polish Crown, the hearts of electors;  
Add golden beams to the holy conclave.

Give to the Cardinals inspiration and character  
So that the new Pope will embrace the helm  
To guide the world which is so weak.

Mary, Star of Peter's boat,  
With only you and toil and its earnings,  
The Vatican's deed will be a new spring world  
Which is approaching.

About this, dear Queen, who comes to the depth of hearts,  
We beg, listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying:  
The new Papacy, like the oak, will spread out  
Beside the Polish oak. [1939]

– *Konstanty Ildefons Galczynski (1905-1953)*

\*This poem seems to announce the election to the Papacy of Pope Pius XII.

## TOTAL CONSECRATION TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

Mother of God, Immaculate Mary!  
To you I dedicate my body and soul,  
all my prayers and work,  
happiness and suffering,  
all that I am and all that I have.  
Willingly, I deliver my heart to you  
in the slavery of love. I leave you  
entirely free to use me  
for the salvation of people and to help the Holy Church,  
of which you are the Mother.  
I want, from now on, to do everything with you,  
through you, and for you.  
I know that by my own strength,  
I will not succeed. You, however, can do everything  
that is the will of your Son, and you are always victorious.  
Therefore, in all affairs, Help of Christians,  
let my family, my parish, and my entire country  
be a true kingdom  
of your Son and of you. Amen.

– *Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (1901-1981)*

## TUNE TO GOD

On the strings deep in the heart  
time plays the melody of life;  
tunes fall plucked

from the brink of thorny experiences;  
at times a quiet clink is welcomed  
like a shy pigeon in flight  
or like the sudden silence of a lute,  
uncertain of tomorrow.

I am looking for the right tune  
and thinking,  
why do I hear Jesus Christ in another tone?  
Why doesn't it adapt itself to me?

I return my lute  
to the hand of Holy Mother  
to be her tune,  
to the measure of God's requirement  
so that the stubborn tunes of life  
be played with adoration  
in the hands of the Stewardess of God's melodies.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## VOTIVE PRAYER OF RAVENSBRUCK\* WOMEN SURVIVORS

Most Holy Mother, Queen of Poland, and our Mother,  
we are coming to your feet,  
we whom you rescued from the hell of the camp  
and the crematorium smoke.  
According to the promises we made,  
every year we assemble under your holy face to thank you  
    for the daily gift of survival,  
    for the grace of enduring faith,  
    for the miracle of returning home.  
You were our Comforter of the afflicted,  
the anonymous who were known only by the red numbers on our sleeves.  
You were our Cure and the Doctor for the sick.

Now, Morning Star, be the leader  
of your own rescued children in their pilgrimage of life,  
so full of worries.  
Guard us so that we will walk  
according to God's instructions.  
Good Mother, you know the burden of hunger and miserable humanity

suffered by those from whom was taken the right to human existence;  
cover, therefore, with your care  
    those who today have no bread and no home,  
    those who are separated from their families,  
    those who are helpless.

Companion of our former slavish work and our undeserved heavy punishment,  
our whispered carols and our sad alleluias,  
to you in our annual pilgrimages, we bring homage and thanks.  
And for those captives who were taken from us by death or murder,  
ask of your Holy Son eternal light. Amen.

- *Author unknown*

\*Nazi concentration camp for women, infamous for its diabolical experiments on women's bodies.

## WANDERER'S LITANY

Radiant Mother  
from the green fields and wayside chapels,  
from city noise and forest stillness,  
from dreams in the fantasy of children  
and in the meditation of old men,  
pray for us.

Madonna sculpted in stone, carved in wood,  
painted on canvas, sung in musical notes,  
sketched in the heart,  
pray for us.

Madonna from the gnarled hand of the mountaineer,  
from the green grass,  
from the crystal tears of the penitent,  
from the thunder of the waterfall,  
from the praying icons,  
pray for us.

Madonna from Czestochowa,  
from Lourdes, Fatima, and Limanowa,  
from wild paths,  
from the melody of bells,  
from cottages and apartments,  
from fields and streets,  
pray for us.



Ebony Madonna,  
Black - smiling  
from millions of sculptures and pictures,  
always the same,  
pray for us.

Madonna,  
the human heart's Radiant Beam,  
Dawn of Hope,  
Best Mother,  
Mary in the Gospels,  
pray for us.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## **MARY, VICTORIOUS HOLY MOTHER**

### **HOLY MOTHER OF CZESTOCHOWA**

Holy Mother of Czestochowa, dressed in pearls,  
All in silver and diamonds,  
Whose heavy crown is supported by angels,  
Pray for us.

Oh, You, whose picture is seen in every Polish hut,  
In the church, in small shops, in magnificent chambers,  
In the hand of the dying, above a child's cradle,  
Under whose picture, through days and nights,  
A light shines continually,  
In whom everyone believes, even those who believe in nothing,  
You, who sees everyone of us through your beautiful eyes,  
Holy Mother of Czestochowa, have mercy on us.

Give soldiers who sing as they march in rows,  
Coolness and rain in the desert, but fire in the snow;  
Let those who are flying be invisible,  
And may those who are on the sea return to their countries. . .  
May everyone who is wounded find clean dressings,  
And from everyone who is lost, may a letter come.  
Take under your protection, Holy Mother of Czestochowa,  
all those who suffer and look in your direction.

Let the barbed wires fall slack and the bricks burst,  
And above Poland raise your hand  
So the last execution is stopped and the prisons are opened.  
Many times the deluge covered us and blood flowed like a river,  
But Czestochowa stood like a rock.  
You also were wounded by the godless,\*  
But you continually intercede for us, Most Holy Mother.  
If we can return to our native country,  
We will hear the trumpeter in the Mariacki tower;\*\*  
Lwow and Wilno will hear the steps of Polish soldiers,\*\*  
And, as in the golden days of our childhood, we will listen  
To the chimes which eternally praise you.  
Holy Mother of Czestochowa, do not abandon us.

– *Jan Lechon (1899-1956)*

\*The Holy Image was slashed by robbers in 1430.

\*\*The city's famous bugle call is played from the tower of St. Mary's Basilica in Krakow every hour on the hour.

\*\*\* Lwow, a city once in Poland, is now in Ukraine; Wilno, a city in Lithuania, was in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

## HOLY MOTHER OF THE MILITARY

Common is the picture - like a thousand copies  
printed in black on yellow paper,  
but through long roads and across many borders  
clasped to our heart, and held sincerely.  
Holy Mother of the Military, trustful and wandering,  
long ago stepped out of her frame and entered the ranks;  
now, she is with us every day and warms us with her smile  
when the wind lashes and the snow burns.  
For us, she is more than a painting in a picture;  
she is herself, whom you will not see daily,  
but when you are sad, when melancholy tears you apart,  
when inactivity numbs you, then she shines like a torch.  
And then you will see her, maybe on a plane,  
maybe on a submarine, maybe in front of a machine gun,  
when you glance at a tank and at a cannon,  
and clouds of morning prayers illuminate the ground.  
Then you are sure that the Holy Mother of Czestochowa  
descended from her picture  
and walked among the soldiers.  
Holy Mother of the Military,

who led us through roads impossible to cross,  
through countries, through borders green and bloody,  
through battlefields where ran rivers of death,  
Holy Mother of the Military!  
Not for our fame,  
but for our strong faith and for the hardships of our lives,  
give freedom to Poland!

– *Wawrzyniec Czeresniewski*

#### HOLY MOTHER OF OSTRA BRAMA\*

Holy Mother, pray that we may have faith;  
Pray that our faith will be strong and persistent.  
Most Holy Mother who shines in Ostra Brama,  
Do not allow our hearts to break while suffering in the prisons, in the camps;  
Help everyone when we weaken to stay strong  
And to see you clearly in our thoughts,  
Holy Mother of Ostra Brama, Our Sweetest Lady!  
You came to us to care for the blows on our faces  
Imposed by the hands of the enemy,  
And for our defenseless bodies which took the bullets and bayonet edges;  
Effect for us only one prayer:  
Give us strength and persistence!

– *Krystyna Kraheńska (1914-1944)*

\*The miraculous icon of Our Lady of Ostra Brama, the Sharp Gate, also known as The Gate of Dawn, is located in the ancient city wall of Wilno (Vilnius), Lithuania.

#### IMMACULATA!

With your name on their lips, the elderly die.  
With your name on their lips, soldiers fall.  
With your name on their lips, exiles expire.  
With your name, the condemned bid farewell  
to the brightness of the sun,  
Your victorious name is like a seal on their lips!  
Mary! Pray for us! Mother!

– *Wojciech Bak (1907-1961)*

## MARY

Your name has no equal on earth,  
You are the Mother of God, named by the church,  
You exceed all celestial beauty,  
You are the most faithful servant of God!  
You bore for mankind salvation,  
Your Son earned redemption for all!

Not one language is worthy to glorify you,  
No brush in human hands can manage to portray you,  
No pen could loyally represent you,  
No chisel can summon you from heaven,  
And yet you are honored through the entire world;  
You are known by the most poor, most simple people and children.

You yourself are love and goodness,  
You are our compassionate Mother and mercy,  
You are for us the welcoming gate to heaven,  
Full of hope and blissful sweetness,  
Your heart obtains everything from God;  
You are our protection and comfort!

– *Mateusz Jez*

## MOTHER OF THE ROADSIDE CHAPELS

Someone gave you a smile  
which treats your face,  
blue in the pupils of your eyes,  
and the color of flax in your hair,  
as if you flew through the air  
lashed by rain,  
bathed in the sun,  
dried out by the wind,  
surrounded by stars in the night.  
Mother of the Roadside Chapels,  
stared at from every human side,  
together with the songs of birds,  
receive the quiet call,  
"Under Your Protection."

– *Krzysztof Milczarek*

## OUR LADY -- COMFORTER

After the nightmare of a heavy day comes a terrible sleepless night;  
Tears do not bring relief; in the heart remains only bitterness;  
How slowly pass the hours of torment;  
How still so far away until the dreadful morning. . .

In clenched hands, always tightly holding  
A medal with your picture, O most holy Lady,  
And even if no words come from the throat,  
Rays of hope flash from the distance.

As once in Jazlowiec, with every grievance, sorrow  
My thoughts run to you – wonderful, good, quiet, silent –  
And before you, my despair melts;  
I know that at your feet, nothing harmful lies in wait for me.

In the chapel of Our Lady of Jazlowiec,\*  
You continually change pain to joy, suffering to calm,  
Poison to sweetness, storm to a beautiful dawn,  
Anguish to what is needed in life's experience.

- *Maria Astromowicz*

\* *The shrine at Jazlowiec is home to the white marble statue of Our Lady of Jazlowiec. During a heated battle in 1919, Polish *uhlans* (elite, light cavalry) successfully defended the monastery in Jazlowiec. Our Lady of Jazlowiec became the patron saint of the *uhlans*.*

## ROAD TO HOME

I came to you  
during the last ray of the sun,  
lost in the duration of eternity,  
futilely searching for the way  
home. . .

It was autumn . . .  
gray. . .

cold. . .  
autumn. . .  
I stood before you  
and did not dare to look in your eyes;  
I reached for memories  
In the darkest corner of my soul.

And later  
I lifted my head;  
staring at your radiant face,  
I could not tear my eyes from you.  
Your smile allowed me to come closer;  
your eyes  
encouraged me to stay longer.

Mary,  
you lifted the load  
on the horizon of my thoughts.  
Already the world is not so gray;  
again the sun is shining.

- *Anna Wroblewska*

## UNDER YOUR PROTECTION

Under your protection, all humanity calls  
To you, Mother, who reigns in heaven.  
With deepest devotion, we bow our foreheads  
In every sorrow and in every need;  
Take our hearts, thirsty for your help,  
Under your protection!

Under your protection, every age entreats,  
Every class, every social group,  
Since you are our universal Mediator,  
Because you have in your hands our destiny of eternity;  
Take all hearts, wounded by suffering,  
Under your protection!

Under your protection, the holy Church continually struggles  
With evil and strong diabolical forces;  
O may the rejoicing in your protection always  
Give her the opportunity to experience triumph and peace!

Take Christianity, tired by the fight,  
Under your protection!

– *Mateusz Jez*

WE/YOU

We (for You)

Only a song and our fingers marching through the rosary,  
flame of the oil lamp and the litany on Sunday morning,  
only the roll call and the *Hejnal* during the opening for the unveiling,\*  
medals and pictures from the pilgrim-stands, celebrating the Assumption,  
only lilacs during May Days with requests and thanksgivings,  
and the poetry from old Polish prayer books  
with your name, Black Madonna.

You (for us)

You are the Star of the Sea during storms,  
during thunder, during homelessness,  
aided by angels with Polish faces and wings.  
You light the candles for Gromniczna\*\*  
during winter storms and heavy frost,  
surrounded by hungry wolves.  
You give the miraculous cures attested to by thousands of votives --  
canes from the blind, pieces of bullets from the hearts.  
You are the swallow and rainbow after the storm,  
the flower and butterfly in the patriotic stained glass windows,  
stars and sunrise over the Polish Millennium.  
You are in the picture frames,  
you and your Son from Bethlehem and from Golgotha.  
You are the Anchor of Hope during brutal Occupation nights  
and the Shield under the sleepy boy after the Resistance.\*\*\*  
You are the Immaculata for the Knight from Oswiecim dressed in stripes.\*\*\*\*  
You gave to us and to the world the white pilgrim Pope  
from the country of the Polish people.  
Queen of the Millennium of the humble nation  
that loves you and honors you,  
Mother of Forgiveness and Understanding, pray for us.

– *Maciej Jozef Kononowicz (1912-1986)*

\*Every morning at Jasna Gora Monastery, the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa is unveiled to the sound of trumpets.

\*\*Gromniczna is Candlemas Day. Legend tells how during the February storms, Our Lady of Gromniczna walks through the snow with a large candle, frightening the hungry wolves away from the villages.

\*\*\*Refers to Nazi Occupation during WWII and the Resistance movement by the Polish Home Army.

\*\*\*\*St. Maximilian Kolbe was founder of the Knights of the Immaculata; he was incarcerated at Auschwitz (Oswiecim) where prisoners wore striped uniforms; he voluntarily gave his life to save another prisoner.

## MARY, SUFFERING MADONNA

DE PROFUNDIS OF MAXIMILIAN KOLBE (Prisoner #16670)

Everyone abandoned me --  
and here is the night of my soul.  
Carbolic acid with a white tongue licks the concrete,  
and the trace of human warmth dries out.  
I would like to bundle myself into a small skein of thread  
in my heart --  
I lie prostrate at the cross.

Stillness -- weak fists do not knock on the walls,  
and nobody counts the time by the commander's steps.  
My sight, like a homeless dog, searches for you on the walls, falls down,  
and, famished, encamps over me.

Fear explodes like a star-bouquet in the twilight and dies out,  
and later I can hear a cry from far away ---  
Father, take away this chalice of bitterness!

I see that I am weakened . . .  
My thoughts melt,  
like the body in the crematorium.  
Let us pray: "Maryja!"

I fall in fear and despair;  
All my weakness and pain I gather like flowers  
and place at the feet of Maryja. I feel her hands on my head;  
she bends over me and quietly cries.  
"Maryja!" such pain I will not tolerate!  
I stand, run --  
my blood covers the walls of my bunker.

The clatter of hooves are in my cell . . .  
the rider stops;  
in his hands he holds the scales  
and looks at me through his empty eye sockets.  
I faint.



Again, she is close to me and smooths my hair.  
She says something . . .  
her voice is sweet . . .  
and quiet. . .  
and pure;  
She covers my heart with peace.

I collect my thoughts.  
I arrange them in the act of shooting,  
and from the inside of my hunger.  
From the bow strings of hunger,  
like a burning arrow, a skyrocket of praise  
rises and hangs in the high heavens --  
for those insane from famine . . .  
who hunger . . .  
for you.

The bolt clicks and the heavy door creaks and opens;  
to my enlarged pupils night appears...  
white --  
Where, oh death, is your sting?  
Oh, my Lady. . .  
Lady . . .  
You have granted my request!

- *Jerzy S. Sito (1934-2011)*

#### FRAGMENT OF LITANY

You, who stepped back from your Son,  
When he started his Father's mission,  
And even though He did not call you "Mother,"  
Your looks were tender and no less happy!  
Or-- when at the end, your Son's body was stripped,  
And he said to you (as God consented):  
"Woman! . . ." O! You chosen from thousands,  
Blessed among women,  
Mother, I see the Mother of the Redeemer,  
Pray for us...  
And He, who descended from His sublime height  
And for a crown chose a crown of thorns,  
In you he had only one guardian angel,

But he could have shielded himself with thousands;  
O! Most Angelic Queen of Angels  
in whom God lives,  
Pray for us...

- *Cyprian Norwid (1821-1883)*

## HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF SORROWS

Holy Mary, Mother of Sorrows,  
teach us to understand  
the meaning of the cross in our lives,  
so that we can add in our bodies  
what is lacking in the suffering of the Christ  
for the good of his mystical body,  
which is the Church.  
And when we finish our temporal pilgrimage,  
help so that we are able to live with you eternally  
in the heavenly kingdom.  
Amen.

- *Author unknown*

## HOLY MOTHER'S TEARS

On your mantel, brilliant diamonds are shining;  
They are tears that flow down before you, Mother.  
They are orphans, full of loneliness and separation  
and full of bitterness,  
whose pain your motherly eyes saw,  
full of sorrow for such a cruel destiny  
that could not save them throughout their lives.  
Did they leave for you the lacerated pain,  
disappointed hearts, and last sob?  
Did they leave at your feet tears  
of sickness and unhappiness?  
Or maybe full of happiness, they gave thanks  
for everything which they received from your hands.  
On your mantel, the diamonds are shining;  
you wanted to have them for decoration.

- *M. Kawincka*

## HYMN TO THE MOST HOLY MOTHER

Reign from high  
On our walls!  
Send a lustrous ray from your eye,  
Glance, Mother, towards the earth!  
Here in supplicating noise  
Fly prayers into space;  
Here orphans, beggars,  
Here worried souls;  
Their hope is only  
Your motherly mercy.  
You know what their thoughts contain  
And what burns in their hearts;  
You know the secrets of suffering  
Because you suffer yourself!  
You know who gives relief:  
May your Son, God-Human,  
With rays of happiness,  
Dry the tears from our eyelids;  
May you intercede with your Son  
Through your motherly mercy.

- *Author unknown*

## SILENCE

There is such a Holy Mother  
Who does not have a chapel.  
She cannot stay at one place:  
Went through Katyn,\*  
Walked through despair  
Meeting the unfaithful,  
Not crying --  
Understanding.

Night leads to a star;  
Sorrow leads to a white birch;  
Love brings the pure lamb  
Peace – loneliness -- faith –

All the time wanting to ask,  
But the throat is dried up.  
God is silence;  
Silence is necessary.

– *Fr. Jan Twardowski (1915-2006)*

\*Katyn is the site of the mass execution by the Soviet Union in 1940 of nearly 22,000 Polish officers.

## YOU CRIED, MOTHER

You cried, Mother,  
at the feet of your Son,  
but I could not cry  
when my son was burned by the enemy  
on the grates at Auschwitz.  
You saw Him risen from the dead,  
but I only believe that my son has risen.  
You saw the crown on His head;  
I did not see  
even the nail in his wound.

My son  
was small  
and had eyes like a flower.  
Your Son carried the cross;  
mine served as the target of German executioners.  
Your pain was tremendous;  
mine was not smaller.  
You could cry at the grave of your Son;  
I sing of mine only through this poem.

Holy  
is the name of your Son;  
my son's name  
disappeared in the smoke  
of the Auschwitz chimneys.  
My son is the dust of the earth;  
Your Son is the cross of the earth.

But  
I call:  
on your earth,

and on my earth,  
on the earth of your Son,  
and on the earth of my son;  
the bells are ringing today:  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Victory! Victory! Victory!

- *Author unknown*

## **MARIAN SHRINES IN POLAND**

### **A PILGRIM'S RECOLLECTION**

Heart -- why do you beat so fast in your breast?  
Why is the blood hot in your veins?  
Oh, the heart is a prophet,  
guessing from a distance how many sensations are waiting for me.

On the hill is a white wall with a church gate.  
Your heart guessed:  
It is Czestochowa, Queen of Heaven,\*  
who from this wall distributed graces of glory.  
Here you will receive the faith --  
If you still remember the prayers that your mother taught you.

Come! Pray! From here no one ever departs saddened.  
Listen! Do you hear the song?  
Through all the earth the name of Mary is thundered!  
From all sides of the earth, Mary's name is proclaimed!

Bells are ringing. The priest sprinkles everyone with holy water,  
and, with song, the caravan enters the church.  
Heartbreak -- the feeling is so strong.  
In the chapel, from the altar,  
the Mother of Compassion smiles a welcome to everyone.  
The crowds kneel down in mysterious silence;  
some have guilt for their offenses.  
Tears reduced, some happy voices:  
"Now, Holy Father, peace I have in my last days  
since I have seen the Holy Mother's face."  
Holy Mother, in jeweled dress and silver crown,  
listens to her children's grievances  
and intercedes to the Lord.

During the whisperd prayers, our Mediatrix  
proclaims the verdict: Regained is faith and hope!  
The priest starts the morning prayers with music,  
and with music and prayers,  
the voices of the people  
fly to heaven.

From your feet at Jasna Gora, I return so happy,  
full of the Holy Spirit,  
like a bird to my country.  
Also, I recall my ancestors who from centuries past  
paid their tribute to you, Holy Mother.

– *Wladystaw Syrokomla (1823-1862)*

\*Czestochowa is the site of the Jasna Gora monastery, home of the miraculous icon of the Black Madonna.

## BAROQUE VS. GOTHIC

Baroque:

Baroque is smiling, invited to heaven,  
Announces the Good News, "God loves sinners."  
Everything has a reason:  
Birth -- Suffering – Death.  
Here there is a place for you, for me,  
For flowers, trees, saints,  
Sufferers, virgins, angels, people, great and small,  
Redeemed through the love of Jesus,  
Stronger than death,  
Singing from happiness.

Gothic:

Gothic is a yearning,  
A cry of eternal love,  
A call to God on High,  
A stretching out of hands,  
Running, shooting a bow to heaven,  
Towers reaching the clouds,  
Stained glass windows of blue  
Telling Him I am dying for love.

– *Aleksandra Bergandy*

## I GIVE YOU

Mary of Jazlowiec,\*

I give you my unfinished moments  
and unloving heart  
and empty, pale words.

You hold the world in folded hands,

A world gray like rain,  
sorrowful and anxious,  
our indifferent days.

Ave Maria,

Inviolable Lady,

defending human love more than life,

You are the Star of Comfort,

Smile of Forgiveness,  
Sun of Goodness.

Another rosary –

golden resin of hope.

Beside the flowers, how silent we are.

You have within you so much truth

that every sung votive

Is gathered for you as a gift of love.

Hearts, hand in hand, go to the meeting of joy;

In silence they kneel

Under the silver moon,

bright ribbon surrounding your feet.

The world stopped in a humble gesture

and sang golden votives,

hymns, timid and light.

The indifferent day has become rosy

from your goodness.

For the extinguished star,

for yesterday's gray evening,

for the days lived without you,

allow me, Mary of Jazlowiec,

to apologize to your hands,  
full of love and sun.

- *Anna Gosiewska*

\*A tall, pure white marble statue of Mary with hands crossed over her breast, head bowed as though looking at the faithful, and with a new moon at her feet, housed at the Marian Shrine in Jazlowiec.

### JASNA GORA\* OASIS

I kneel down before you,  
Oasis,  
in the desert of life,  
present on human roads  
where a handful of water is salvation.

I kneel down before you, Gate of Heaven,  
Temple of the Covenant from Jasna Gora.  
Your face,  
a desert burned by the heat  
of human history,  
blackened in the waiting,  
comes to me for an encounter.

I kneel down under the well  
of your eyes  
in order to drink the peace of sanctity.  
I kiss the sand,  
which covers with green freshness,  
the dark sand of our ways.

Face with the cracked furrows,  
smile at me.

I kneel down before you,  
Well of Life.  
Immersed in the deep spring  
which gushed from your womb,  
I relax in God,  
soothed by your loving words with Him.

I kneel down at the Jasna Gora Spring.  
You are here alive,  
Oasis of the Nation.

-*Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*



\*Jasna Gora (Bright Mountain) is the most important Marian shrine in Poland. It contains the miraculous icon of the Black Madonna, Our Lady of Czestochowa, which, according to legend, was painted by Saint Luke.

## JASNA GORA WALLS

If you do not believe in the whispering winds  
that hum thanksgiving songs above the Polish earth,  
if you do not feel the heat of love  
although you have a human heart,  
come and listen  
how the Source breathes.

Walk to the walls of the Ark of the Covenant;  
place your ear to the walls of the chapel;  
hear the prayers from the centuries  
and whisper your own night prayers  
that you would be ashamed to say during the day.

Kiss the stones saturated  
by tears and blood of heroes;  
enter near Our Lady's throne;  
look in the eyes of Our Mother  
and you will find in them yourself;  
fall on your face  
and drown the stones,  
hungry for your tears.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## KALWARIA ZEBRZYDOWSKA\*

In this place, in an unusual way,  
you can prepare your heart and mind to experience  
the penetration of the mystery  
which joins the suffering of the Savior and His suffering Mother.  
In the center of this mystic love,  
everyone who comes will find himself, his daily life, his weakness,  
and often strength for faith and a hope  
which flows from the conviction that the Mother  
did not abandon her child in distress,  
but led him to her Son and entrusted him to His mercy.

*-Pope John Paul II (1920-2005)*

\*Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Marian shrine of the Passion, has been called the "Polish Jerusalem." Its hilly landscape is the site of numerous chapels and monuments dedicated to the Passion of Christ; the church houses the miraculous picture of the Mother of God of Calvary; during Lent a live enactment of the Stations of the Cross draws thousands of pilgrims.

LUDZMIERZ BELL\*

Do you hear?  
The Ludzmierz Bell is ringing.  
Is it for some alarm?  
No, it rings  
Because it has a feeling;  
It knows very well what worries us,  
What lies in our hearts  
Since it has lived with us so many years.  
When we are without hope,  
When we are so full of pain,  
Also its heart bursts with grief.

It calls throughout the whole area  
And calls to whomever it can:  
"Come to the Holy Mother in Ludzmierz;  
She will help you."

*-Stanislawa Szewczyk*

\*The Marian Shrine at Ludzmierz dates back to 1234 and is the oldest shrine in the Podhale region, the mountainous region in southern Poland. Home to the fifteenth century miraculous statue of Our Lady of Ludzmierz, it was the place where Polish partisans met to plan the defense of Poland during WW II.

OSTRA BRAMA\*

Yes: a simple town  
and from straight above the gate,  
she bows her face,  
She – starshaped – the Same. . .

The Same, who from centuries  
continually shines in Ostra Brama,  
Guardian of the God-Human  
in the defensible walls.

She does not have a magnificent church,

and glows only with the light  
and the star diadems  
around her inclined face.

Often anguished people  
fall upon their knees here  
for she is their only Mother,  
a mother of soothing, a mother of sorrow.

Their prayers, swollen with grief,  
soar towards her,  
one in the faith of their great-grandfathers,  
the people of the Crown\*\* and of Lithuania.

*-Author unknown*

\*This shrine is a chapel built over the ancient eastern defensive wall in Vilnius. The wall is known as "Ostra Brama," or "Sharp Gate," in Poland and as "Gate of Dawn" in Lithuania. The miraculous icon of Our Lady of Ostra Brama, Mother of Mercy is enshrined in this chapel where it looks down on the faithful gathered below. The painting of Jesus as the Divine Mercy was venerated for the first time from this chapel.

\*\*"Crown" refers to Poland; the 1386 marriage of Jadwiga of the Crown Kingdom of Poland to Jagiello of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania joined the two kingdoms into the Polish-Lithuanian Union.

## OSTRA BRAMA MADONNA

Above the gate, above the city, above the earth:  
the Vilnius Holy Mother.  
In the sky the stars are changing,  
and the Ostra Brama Madonna is rapturous.

The path among the stars is going towards  
where it waits for her moon.  
Madonna of Ostra Brama,  
Hope of life after life.

*- Maria Olszowska*

## PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY MOTHER

From the walls of old Warsaw,  
we go to the Citadel of the Nation,\*  
the everlastingly young mountain.

We go, with pride, through streams of rain,  
through scorching August heat,  
through clouds of dust, prayers on our lips.  
We carry in our bags the weight of the litany,  
but in the heart -- hope.

We exchange only glances,  
immersing our hearts in the brightness of the "Dark Face,"  
offering tears  
and collecting smiles  
for the new day of pilgrimage.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

\*It is customary in August for people to walk in pilgrimage from their cities, towns and villages to Jasna Gora Monastery, home of the icon of the Black Madonna, to celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## POLONEZ\*

With the Polonez, the trees enter the Polish autumn.  
Songs of their country are carried in their leaves;  
through gardens, alleys, and fields  
march birches, maples, and poplars,  
the maples full of colors,  
and the birches weaving white braids in the Indian summer.

They come across deserted, desolate road-side chapels  
with sad faces lashed by rain, baked by the sun, dried by the wind;  
how sad they look.  
The delicate maples blow the dust from their faces,  
the birch wrap white veils around the chapels,  
and a little child starts to smile  
and move little fingers in the rhythm of the Polonez.

The trees are marching; their leaves carry the sun.  
With the Polonez, the trees enter the Polish autumn.

- *Author unknown*

\*A courtly processional dance performed by couples; most representative of Polish dances, it reflects the proud independence and national spirit of Poland.

## STOCZEK\*

The Archangel Gabriel flies very lightly,  
Knocks at the tower's silent bells,  
With wings touches the dome of the street lights,  
And kisses the forest which snoozes in the valley  
So that it rustles with morning prayers.

Daybreak looks to the windows and runs  
To open places for the sun.  
The flowerbed on the green is filled with roses,  
The cross with flame jets to heaven  
By the thanksgiving prayers of those who rise  
and come to the church to honor the Queen of Peace.

And the sons of Assisi come to the throne of Mary,  
Conducting the pilgrims  
Who carry the vows of their great-grandfathers,  
But Martial Law closes the gates.  
The last Preface the priest sang with tears;  
The Polish people knelt under the closed gate,  
And with bloody clenched fists called out,  
"To Mother, let us go -- To Mother!"

But the obedient guard upheld the order --  
Until God tore the seal!

The Archangel in the morning raises the baton,  
The chords of the bells sound,  
People from every place are coming,  
The deaf clock appoints again--  
an audience with Holy Mother of Stoczek.

– *Maria Zientara-Malewska*

\*The Basilica at the Stoczek Monastery contains the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Stoczek, Queen of Peace. Access to this shrine was often prohibited by foreign forces occupying Poland. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński was held under house arrest here for two years during the Communist era.

## STORIES FROM OLD FIGURES

Stories from old figures,  
Those roadside chapels,\* those from past years. . .  
Truly they are our fathers' past,  
The forgotten world of our forefathers!

We can meet them everywhere,  
Even if they do not have a date on them.  
Think, through the centuries,  
Our grandfathers were praying beside them!

They stand, quiet and alone.  
Sometimes the wind sings for them,  
Sometimes the rain washes off the dust,  
Sometimes someone puts flowers on them!

Today, after years, many figures  
Have stories to tell us;  
Others are carried by the wind over the fields  
And those, only God knows!

*-Author unknown*

\*The faith of the Polish people is recorded in the roadside shrines that dot the Polish landscape, often appearing at the entrance to villages, made from every imaginable material, and some over 800 years old.

## THEY DO NOT HAVE WINE

They are coming to Mother.  
The need for a meeting with her and with her Son  
is greater than any other value.  
Those who understand this  
are those who once touched their ear  
to this venerable wall,  
gazed into the eyes of Mother,  
and heard her words:  
"They do not have wine."

*- Author unknown*

## VISIT

I come to you, smiling Lady,  
in the amber dress on the silver background,  
and the dark brocade overhung with votives.  
Not for this did I come,  
to cover you with numerous requests  
as the pagans do.

I know that you always remember us  
-- we here on earth --  
and your merciful smile  
is like a bandage swaddling our sick souls.  
I come only for this,  
to be with you, like air to breathe,  
and so that at your feet  
I can place my poor heart,  
like a small silver votive.

- *Author unknown*

### VISIT TO JAZLOWIEC\*

The Queen of Jasna Gora wandered through Poland.  
Today, she visited the Lady of Jazlowiec.

Singing crowds walk in procession behind her  
To her secluded, monastic chapel  
Where the faithful prayers continue,  
Peering into the abyss of secret words. . .  
There, a rocky peak, snowy marble,  
*Purissima! Integra!*

The people on their knees gave praise to God,  
Exceedingly quiet, impressed, affected.

The Madonnas, to one another whispered, "Ave."

"And from where, Mother of my Lord,  
have you come to me, as a pilgrim, humble,  
without a crown, Virgin Mother of God?"  
--so spoke the white Lady to the Black.

"I come," answered the Black Madonna,  
"by Polish soil to fill it with seeds  
-- all the fields and ridges --  
so that none will fall to ruin.  
Through hearts, I will conquer;  
I will reap a crop of hearts,  
And all the grain to the last I will collect."

(Let the Black Madonna picture tell you  
how the sun of love tanned her face.)

“I am the Mother of all, without difference,  
the good and the wicked,  
and you, Lady,  
shine here white, a white lily.”

Virgin of virgins,  
    Rock of Christ,  
        Footbridge of Stone!

- *Author unknown*

\*Marian Shrine in southeastern Poland, home of the miraculous white marble statue of Our Lady of Jazlowiec.

## **ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II**

### **FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**

Already four years have passed — since you changed your address;  
How very much we miss you.  
Although we know you are always with us, still we search for you.  
We look through the largest telescope, and we discover  
A mountaineer's hat is on your head.  
Immediately the mountaineer's music was added.  
If someone near you takes a fancy to your hat,  
At once we will send another -- by special delivery.

-- *Author unknown*

### **JOHN PAUL II AT ZYWIECCZYNA, 22 May 1995**

Here where the Vistula is born,  
Where she begins,  
Where mountains frolic  
With clouds on the tops,  
Here, in these beautiful mountains,  
You arrive in this secluded spot  
To greet your countrymen.



Let all be glad! Rejoice  
In cities and villages,  
Throughout the mountains.  
You have the words of consolation  
For sadness and troubles.  
You attempt to dry the tears  
That flow from our eyes.

- *Author unknown*

## MOTHER OF THE LIVING

O Mary, dawn of the new world,  
Mother of the living,  
to you we entrust all the affairs of our lives.  
Look, O Mother, on the innumerable throngs of children  
who are not allowed to come into the world,  
the poor who are overcome  
by the difficulties of life,  
men and women  
sacrificed in inhuman violence,  
the senile and the sick  
killed through indifference or false mercy.  
Watch, so that all who believe in your Son  
strive openly and with love to proclaim  
to the people of our epoch the Gospel of life.  
Obtain for them grace and the acceptance of it  
as a gift always new,  
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude  
throughout life,  
and the courage of achieving and performing  
the witness of it  
so that they can build,  
along with all people of good will,  
a civilization of truth and love  
for the worship and praise of God the Creator  
who loves life.

– *John Paul II (1920–2005)*

THE BLACK MADONNA, “MOTHER” OF JOHN PAUL II

She came to us from the East,  
dark,  
silent,  
Virgin Mother.  
She came under the wings of the white eagles  
to guard Polish homes.

She was not afraid of sacrilegious sabers,\*  
Swedish bullets,\*\*  
claws of the conquerors;  
she does not even run away from the den of the dragon  
and was not afraid of the bloody glare of wars.

Not overgrown are the ways to Jasna Gora --  
loud silence,  
Bright Mystery.

Through rainbow tears  
her wounded face  
brings about transformation.

She came out of six centuries of stillness  
to broaden the way to the Source of Hope  
in the trust of the purple to the white Pope\*\*\*  
through whose heart the whole world hears her.

- Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )

\*The Holy Image was slashed by robbers in 1430.

\*\*In 1655, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was invaded by thousands of Swedish troops; at Jasna Gora, a small group of clergy, infantry men, nobles and townspeople – full of confidence in the Black Madonna – successfully defended the monastery against overwhelming odds.

\*\*\*In 1978, wearing the purple-scarlet vestments of a Cardinal, Karol Wojtyła became Pope John Paul II, clad in vestments of white and dedicating his papacy to the Holy Mother of God.

## TO THE POLISH PINE\*

Where vineyards, where aromatic orange trees bloom,  
You, my homeless simpleton, Zakopane pine,  
From mother and sisters separated,  
Stand an orphan in a foreign garden.

How pleasant a guest you are for my eyes  
because together we experience the same verdict.  
I also have made a pilgrimage from afar.  
And for me in a foreign land the time of life escapes.

Why - even though you are surrounded by the efforts of strangers,  
Did you not grow -- why did you lose your strength?  
You have here the early sun and the spring dew,  
But yet your branches turn pale and bow down.

You wither, you dry up,  
sad among plain flowers,  
and there is no life for you  
because you are not in your native land. Faithful Tree!

You will not tolerate exile and longing;  
Still a little autumn and winter weather,  
And you will fall down dead -- the foreign land will bury you, my Tree!  
Will I be happier than you?

- *Stefan Witwicki (1801-1847)*

\*"To the Polish Pine" is sometimes referred to as "The Pope's Poem" because of the following incident: Thinking they might lessen Pope John Paul's longing for his native land, "a pilgrimage was made by the Gorale (Highlanders) of Poland to offer a Polish pine tree to Pope John Paul II. The tree was planted in the Vatican Garden in 1985; however, unfortunately, the tree dried up and died." The Poem "The Polish Pine," written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Polish poet Stefan Witwicki, who himself was separated from his homeland for political reasons, seemed to capture what might have been the sentiments of Pope John Paul II as he watched the demise of the Polish pine in the Vatican Garden.

## UNITED WITH YOU

We are united in prayer  
with you, Mother of Christ,  
with you, who shared His suffering ....  
You guide us to the heart  
of your Son,  
suffering on the cross,  
who, when in the midst of his own death,  
revealed love to the end.  
O you, who also suffered,  
permit us always to persevere  
in the embrace of this mystery.  
Mother of the Redeemer!  
Bring us closer to the Heart of your Son!

– *John Paul II (1920-2005)*

## CHRISTMAS POEMS

### AT JESUS' MANGER

Here,  
the wise man must pass in silence,  
the glass and the eye  
shall not see everything --  
only the heart  
which shall beat stronger,  
only the soul  
when it is refreshed by bread  
that becomes the heaven  
in which God lives.

- *Wladyslawa Anna Jamroz*

### CHRIST'S BIRTH

You, Jesus,  
Are not always welcome.  
In many mangers,  
There is even a shortage of hay.  
The inn is full;  
Overnight accommodations are refused.  
A poor but hospitable stable  
Will be found.  
Shepherds will come,  
Leaving behind their flock.  
Kings will notice Your birthday  
From the stars.  
Herod will be furious,  
Afraid of your power.  
And You come --  
Silent, humble, small --  
And bring  
The biggest love  
Eternal  
Which shall not draw back  
From the sacrifice of the cross.

- *Wladyslawa Anna Jamroz*

## HIGHLANDERS' CAROL

O, little One, Little One, Little One,  
on the rough hay,  
wouldn't it be better for you to be  
in your Father's heavenly bedding?

Wouldn't it be better for you to be  
sitting on the front steps in heaven?  
Truly, your beloved Father  
did not chase you away.

There, the angels play music  
so beautifully,  
but here at our doorstep  
are only human struggles.

The Wise Men will leave your manger;  
the Kings will leave your hut,  
and at your crib will remain  
only human tears and suffering.

Look, Little One, the stars die out,  
and in the harsh darkness,  
the buried miners search  
for the way out of the mine.

Black tears fall from their eyes  
when out of the depths,  
they drag the terrible weight of the earth  
on their tired shoulders.

Look, how the threatening flames solidify  
when in a blizzard of sparks,  
they bloom into a fire that burns the school –  
The children are inside.

The glow darkens, the ashes cool,  
the grieving people weep.  
Did you call these children  
to yourself, Little One?

O, If only Saint Joseph would read  
to you from the newspaper,  
how many fears and despairs  
live in this world.

O, then he would tell you  
how terribly the soldiers are burned  
by the necklace of bullets,  
a string of bloody beads.

O, perhaps then, Little One,  
you would not have come to Earth  
because here, even our fir trees  
grow in the shape of a cross.

But since you are here, Little One –  
and the Father will praise your coming--  
then, with your hand, hold back  
the woodcutter's blind axe.

Let human violence take fright,  
along with everything that hurts,  
so that through your grace there may be peace  
to people of good will.

Raise your hand, Little One,  
and, just as we lift the heavy burdens of life,  
lift, with our participation, the dark earth  
to the light of your heavenly home.

- *Zbigniew Chalko (1921-1994)*

## HOLIDAY GREETING

Let human hearts  
Be like the Bethlehem manger  
When Mary laid the Holy Child  
On the hay.

Mary will keep watch so that in our hearts  
Jesus will not cry,  
And so that the weight of human transgressions  
Will not crush the Savior.

- *Wladyslawa Anna Jamroz*

## WARSAW CAROL, 1939

O, Mother, put aside the day of the birth  
For another time,  
May the eyes of the Creator not see  
How they oppress us.

May yor most beloved Son be born  
Among other stars,  
But not with us, not in the saddest  
Of all cities.

Because in our city, which you remember  
From distant days,  
Crosses arose, crosses and cemeteries,  
Fresh from blood

Because our children fell, out of breath,  
Under the shrapnel.  
O, Holy Mary, pray for us,  
But don't come here.

And if, regardless, you want to give birth in the shadow  
Of Warsaw's cinders,  
It would be better – immediately after birth –  
To throw Him on the cross.

-*Stefan Balinski (1915-1972)*

## WAR TIME LULLABY

Sleep, my Darling . . . Sleep, Little One.  
Do not cry anymore. For us, today is not the worst of all.

There is a roof over this poor stable,  
And we have a manger, where I can lay You.

So what if the shed is full of holes?  
No one is driving us out into the frost.

The ox and the donkey will blow their breath on Your holy feet,  
And I have bound straw to sleep on.

You will not be freezing  
Since on the way no one pulled my veil from my head.  
There are mothers poorer than I;  
I, at least, have something with which to swaddle You.

Sleep . . . angel voices You will hear;  
In this same dream, white wings will bow to You.  
No enemies will come during the night,  
No rap on the door by a rifle or bayonet.

And King Herod, my Son, is far away.  
He will not touch You.

And our home is waiting for us in Nazareth;  
No one will interrupt our return home.  
No, my Beloved, You are not the poorest in the world  
Since for ending bitterness You came into this world.

My Beloved! When as a human being  
You desired to reconcile divinity with suffering —  
Not in Bethlehem -- but in Your Mother's kingdom  
Should this child be born today.

- *Wladyslawa Anna Jamroz*

## **POEMS AND PRAYERS OFFERED TO GOD**

### **AT SUPPER**

Twelve sat there  
around the simple table  
without decorative napkins  
or a china dinner set;  
the aroma of broken bread  
filled their nostrils;  
the wine in the tumblers  
was like blood -- red, clear,  
and He washed their feet,  
full of great love  
which could not fit



in the narrow room  
-- only the crickets behind the window  
became silent in amazement  
that it is so simple.

– *Krystyna Zajac*

## BARKA (RIVER BOAT)

Once the Lord stood on the shore,  
searching for people ready to follow Him,  
to catch hearts with God's words of truth.

O Lord, it was You who looked at me;  
Your lips today pronounced my name.  
My boat I will leave on the shore;  
together with You, today I will begin a new catch.

- *Fr. Jan Pach (1956- )*

## BE MERCIFUL\*

O, be merciful and for a short time  
Cover me with your hands, like a bird without feathers!  
Let me nourish myself with a morsel of truth,  
Let it be that I finish my prayers,  
Let the planted flower grow on the tomb,  
Let it be that I hear how the heart beats,  
Let me fly through the circle of the sun. . .  
You can wait! You are eternal!

– *Maria Konopnicka (1842-1910)*

\*Alternate title: SONG IV

## CHRIST

In the petals of the rose, I see a trace of His blood,  
In the stars, the brightness of His eyes;  
The flowers carry the features of His face,  
Heaven bedews the fountain of His tears.

The everlasting snow has the white of His body;  
Whether in the roar of the thunder or the song of the birds,  
I hear only the tune of His voice;  
His beating heart is the rhyme of the wave.

I read His writing in the wild rock;  
Every road carries a trace of His foot print;  
Thorns weave themselves into His crown,  
And every tree throws shade on His cross.

- *Josef-Maria Plunkett (1887-1916)*

## CROSS

Wood and metal  
Combined with the body,  
Symbol of martyrdom,  
Picture of redemption,  
Golgotha now  
And glory in the future:  
Carry him in the heart of the earth.

- *Grazyna Swiderska*

## FANTASIA OF THE PEOPLE

You are the sorceress.  
You have eyes that look into heaven  
and across Earth  
and see everything.

You have lips from which songs bloom,  
simple as the wild flowers  
and fresh as spring.

You have a mouth from which,  
as from a rainbow full of colors,  
emerges a beautiful story  
such as a poet's soul composed.

You have tears as heavy as pearls  
and a smile like the butterflies.

You have the naivete of a child  
and the wisdom of a scientist.

You are blessed since you see, hear, and understand  
more than any human mind can absorb,  
and you have the faith of a little one.

Fantasia, with angelic wings,  
you managed to be at the Everlasting throne  
to see what no one ever saw  
and to tell the people about heavenly miracles.

You saw Holy Mother  
in the crown of seven stars  
and with the lark at her foot to sing for her.

Fantasia of the People,  
sing the unending songs  
so the souls can forget  
the dark moments of their daily lives.

Fantasia of the People,  
open your treasury.

– *Marian Gawalewicz (1852-1910)*

## GIFT

You gave Your Son  
So that I could be in Your Kingdom.  
Life, so that I could live for You,  
Free will, so I could choose  
the path of Ilfe,  
Faith, to believe in  
Your existence,  
Intellect, to recognize  
The sign of Your love,  
Heart, to love my neighbor,  
Tears, to demonstrate  
emotion,  
Lips, to be able to glorify  
You in song,

A cross in life to understand  
How great a grace is Your love.

- *Katarzyna Sarabun*

## HAPPINESS

People, people, do you know  
That there is happiness in this world?  
Look at the heavens, pursue with your eyes  
The stars, the clouds;  
Listen to the song which nature  
is singing in your soul,  
In the singing of the birds, in the roar of the water,  
In the rustle of the leaves on the tree,  
And reciprocally compose from yourself  
The most beautiful song, a song of dreams  
of angels and of heaven, with a noble stroke.

– *Zmichowska Narcyza*

## HOPE OF DAWN

I live between the scream of emptiness  
and the silence of heaven.  
I walk on the ridge of hope  
and add poetry from the pages of the Gospels,  
and still I walk in darkness on the edge.

Through the smeary pit of events,  
which the sun still has not cleared up,  
I go to the crest of the mountain  
with the hope of dawn.

- *Author unknown*

## I BELIEVED

I believed  
still yesterday

in Your immense goodness  
and unending love.

I recognized Your greatness  
after the breaking of the bread  
and forgiveness.

I searched in prayer  
the way to You  
to probe and understand myself.

I believed  
still yesterday --  
but today, I am torn by pain,  
trapped in a drop of time  
and in exhausted thoughts,  
full of darkness  
and homeless silence.

Tomorrow -- if I come  
because it is fit,  
then You -- perhaps again --  
will sow grain  
in my barren soil  
and fill my soul  
with a torrent of signs.

Tomorrow -- if I understand --  
Your way, Lord,  
will nourish and warm me.

- *Barbara Witucka*

IMAGINE: THE CROSS!

That God chose the cross  
we are astonished --  
As if we did not know  
that nothing joins us together  
as much as suffering.

- *Wieslaw Jarosz*

## MY REQUEST

Do not tell me, please,  
that everything passes,  
that flowers fade  
and roses wither.

Do not cry  
when someone injures you  
and do not kill your dreaming.

Better, tell me  
how to cry so that no one will see,  
how to pray so that the Lord will hear,  
how to live so that when I die,  
something more will remain  
than an epitaph on a slab.

- *Dagmara Mi da Tworkowa*

## ONLY THE WORD

I am afraid  
that I will never understand  
from where come so many crippled children -- the fruit of love,  
and why we must give birth to life in pain,  
and how to shelter them since this is only a stopping place,  
a short, hazy eternity with an inevitable ending.  
And what is eternity? Does time also die?

But say only the word. . .

I am afraid  
that perhaps as I go towards my Emaus,  
i will not recognize that You accompany me on the road,  
and you will get ahead of me, and I will have to  
walk further on the road,  
and no one will find out about our meeting.

But say only the word. . .

I am afraid  
of my hopeless, primitive wisdom of the mind  
about the mystery of an Old Man with a grey beard,

a Person stretched on a diagonal beam,  
and a dove hovering above Them,  
painted by so many great masters,  
which only with eyesight I can comprehend.

But say only the word. . .

I am afraid  
of this day, which slants towards the West  
to meet the evening, suddenly so near,  
to announce night, my last cover,  
under which I do not know what kind of meeting is waiting for me  
and whether in the dark valley I will not be frightened.

But say only the word. . .

I am afraid  
that comfort in this fear will also be weak  
like my shaky faith, which should not be afraid  
but believe in the justice of reward and punishment  
since one and another so often disappoint  
and discouragement and despair are like daily bread.

But say only the word...

I am afraid  
that You will never say the word,  
as You were afraid that the Father at that time abandoned You,  
but after all, You knew that was not true.  
But what about me -- descendant of Adam, Abel, Job?  
Should I only wait? Wait or sin?

And so, say only the word. . .

- *Jan Przetacznik*

## OUR FATHER

Our Father, who art also on earth  
where Your name is hallowed not only in prayer,  
and your Kingdom does not roar in the sun like the trees  
but is silent in the dark like grain,  
bitter like justice and hard like holiness,  
and on the rock it rises against hope.

It grows up from the earth and comes from heaven;  
It is difficult for us -- like faith -- and impossible -- like love  
which comes regardless and calls us.  
These matters will be a temptation stronger than bread,  
and let the final form be Your will  
when faith and hope already disappear.

- *Author unknown*

## PARABLE OF THE FATHER

When you try to forget,  
I remember.

When you cannot fall asleep,  
I wait until you wake up.

When you decide not to return,  
I look for you.

When you do not see the entry,  
I ask that the gate be opened.

When you are dying from hunger,  
I order the table to be covered.

When you are shivering in rags,  
I choose a garment for you.

When you say I will stand and go,  
I move in the opposite direction.

When you rub your eyes, dry like stones,  
I cry for you.

When you do not dare to stretch out your hand,  
I enclose you in my arms.

When your brother reminds me that you departed,  
I answer that you yourself have returned.

– *Janusz Pasierb (1929–1993)*



## PRAYER FOR ME

Prayer for me  
is a deep breath  
between sadness and happiness,  
between love, which is still not enough.

I dedicate myself to God,  
so I pray through everything  
that fills my daily life.

I pray with the words of the Psalms,  
on the beads of the rosary;  
I stand tall like a ballerina on her toes  
in order to see God better.

Prayer is the breath of God in us,  
a breath that is life;  
I pray to live for God.

- *Marian Drynkorn*

## QUESTION

Grandmother's warm room  
smells of prayers and lavender.  
The guardian angel  
curiously gives ear  
to check if I, for sure,  
whisper every word  
of my evening prayers  
so that I might calmly  
say, "Amen."  
The saints look  
with authority on my grimaces,  
and all of them  
turn their heads  
in embarrassment  
at my question:  
"Why does Jesus again  
today hang on the cross  
when, after all,  
yesterday and today  
I was polite?"

- *Lucja Opiela*

## SOUNDS OF THE WORLD

The supple birch sings for You, Lord,  
in the blast of the wind;  
with pleasure she moves her body  
to the beat.

Already the butterfly

has composed his song for You  
and waits his turn impatiently.

Two bumblebees in a bass duet  
practice before the evening concert,  
a concert that is not followed by applause --  
instead, You, Quiet Witness,  
will send a delicate breeze  
and throw a bouquet of rays from the setting sun;  
this concert  
will be sung for You by life.

- *Anna Studnicka*

## SUNBEAM

Into my home  
falls a sunbeam  
and with it, God's love.

And the fields of grain are brightened,  
and the flowers are as beautiful as the sun.

How much joy comes from your one love,  
O, my God.

She never loses a person  
but only gives help  
in school and in work,  
in misery and in hunger;  
only share a prayer with her.  
The Heart of the Lord is open  
for everyone,  
but you yourself choose  
your own way.

- *Maria Szlachetka*

## YOU ARE WITH ME

Everywhere you are with me,  
Divine Savior. . .  
In the clouds and trees,  
In the mountains and in church.

In the morning dew,  
In the bitter cold,  
I see your greatness,  
O my Jesus Christ.

Always you teach me,  
O my Savior;  
For this I thank you,  
Divine Friend.

I am a sinner,  
always counting on you, Lord,  
that you will hear me  
and that you will help me.

This only I desire,  
O Lord my God:  
That in my heart  
You will constantly have a home.

- *Jan Holubowicz*